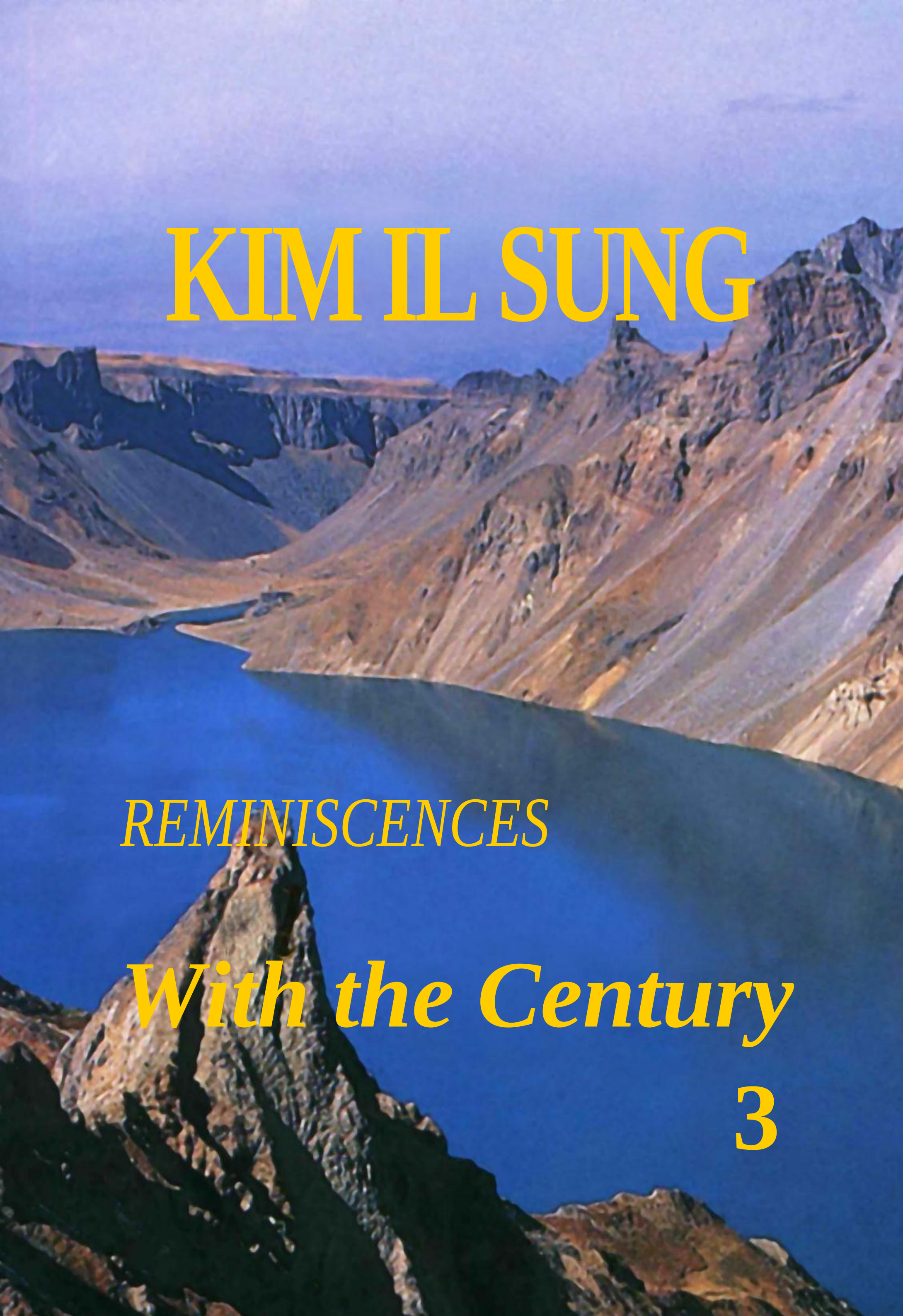


KIM IL SUNG

REMINISCENCES

With the Century

3

KIM IL SUNG

With the Century

3

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
PYONGYANG, KOREA
1993



Part I

THE ANTI-JAPANESE REVOLUTION

빼앗긴 조국을 되찾기
위하여 피를 흘리고 목숨을
바친 사람들만이 조국이
얼마나 귀중하고 조국에로 다시
가는길이 얼마나 험난하고
시련에 찬 길인가를 진정
뼈에 사무치게 느낀다고
말할수 있다.

김일성

Translation from the preceding page:

Only those who have shed their blood and sacrificed their lives to repossess their country can be said to have fully experienced how valuable their fatherland is and how arduous and tortuous is the road to return to it.

Kim Il Sung



On my visit to the old man O Thae Hui back in the homeland whom I used to call on in the guerrilla zone

Jiandao Was Soaked in a Sea of Blood by the Barbarous Atrocity of the Japanese Imperialists



Wandering men and women on their way to Jiandao, carrying heavy loads on their backs and heads

Dong-A Ilbo, in November 1933, reported that Koreans accounted for 80 per cent of Jiandao's total population of 570,000



Border policeman searching the wandering men and women



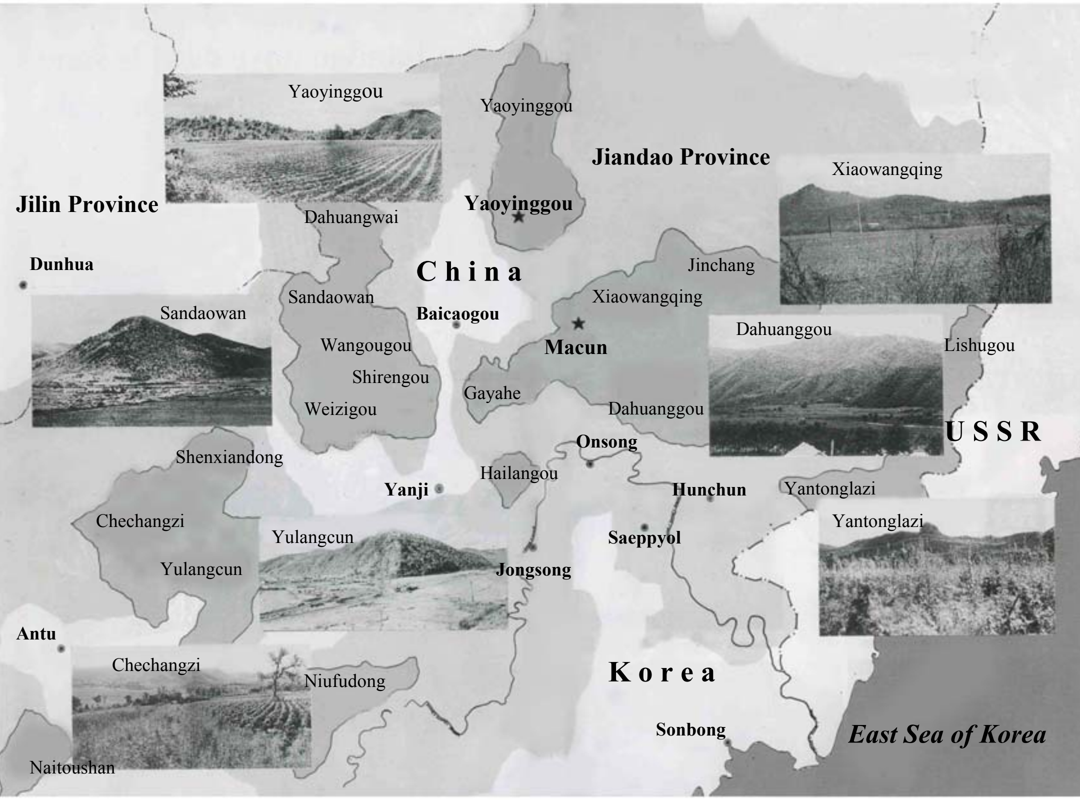
間島一帶도不安
羅南師團도出動
間島地方에物情騷然
豆滿江岸戰時氣分
第十九師團에
間島出動命令
會寧軍隊移動
對岸二十里占領
中國軍民多數
日本人村襲擊
風前燈火같은同胞
通遼方面에
三千名





Oh, the sea of blood
Spilt by the suffering people
In the icy cold,
How many have died a wretched death!

Guerrilla Bases on the Coast of the Tuman River (1932-1935)

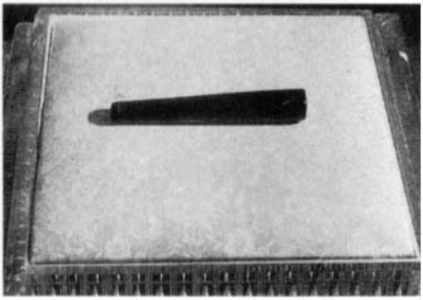




The log-cabin of the headquarters of the guerrilla army in Macun, Xiaowangqing



The seal which I used



In September 1933, I met Comrade Choe Hyon. The amber cigarette-holder which I gave him in memory of our first meeting



A well which we used



A guerrilla army training ground

The First Commanders of the Guerrilla Zones



An Kil



Ryang Song Ryong



Pak Tong Gun



Pak Kil



Kim Hae San



Cha Ryong Dok



Choe Chun Guk

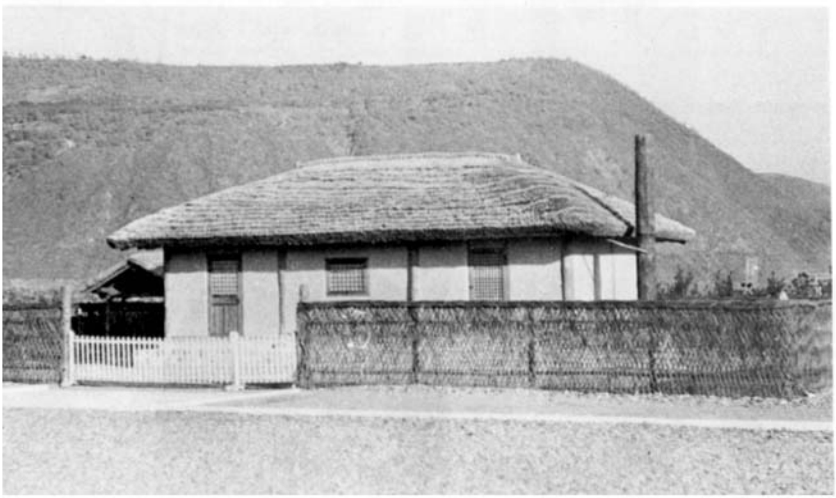


Wangjae Mountain





The place where the meeting of the heads of the underground revolutionary organizations and the political workers in the Onsong area was held on March 11, 1933, and the slogan inscribed on a tree near the spot



O Ui Son's house in Sinhung village, Jongsong County, where I had lunch on the occasion of the *Tano* festival in 1933



On a visit to the site of the Wangjaesan Meeting

The Extension of the Armed Struggle into the Homeland



Slogan discovered in the Onsong area where the meeting of the representatives of the party and other revolutionary organizations in the homeland was held (February 1934)



Thamakgol, where the first traces of the homeward march still remain



A panorama of the Ryuda Islet



穩城侵入한 共軍
警備隊와 交火
四十餘名의 大部隊가 出現
國境各警察大緊張

咸北長德監視所를
武裝共黨이 襲擊
巡査一名은 被擊되어 重傷
隣近武裝警官總出動

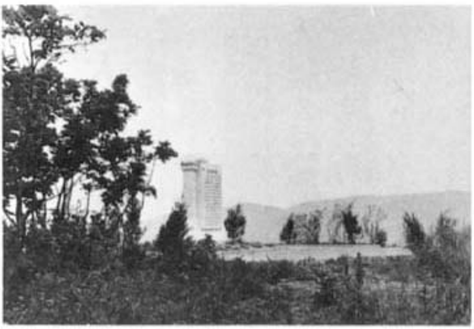
News reports on the advance of the guerrillas into the homeland



The Jangdok ferry in Onsong



A secret camp in Mt. Wangjae



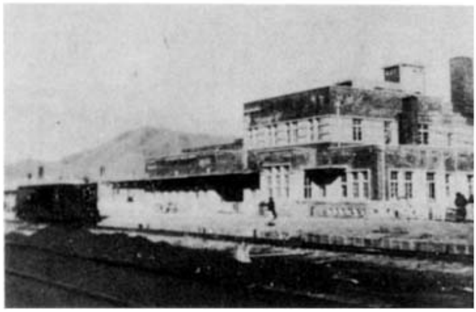
A battleground in Unam, Jongsong



A secret camp in Karaji Hill



A secret camp in Ssokssaegol

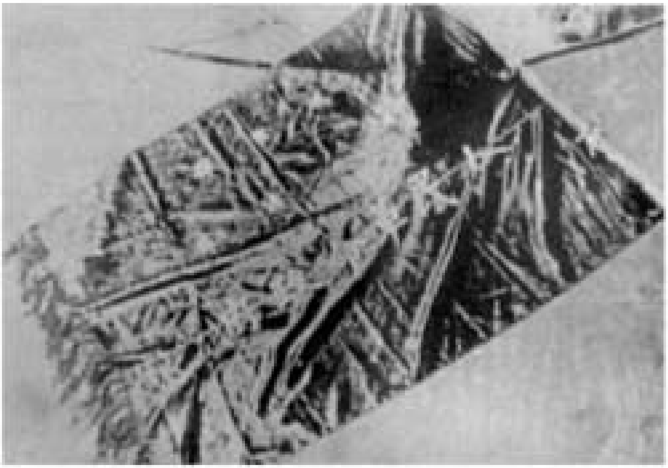


A mountain overlooking Tumen



豫審終局一年만에
穩城勞農事件終結
清津法院公判에廻附
全長元을中心으로

Newspapers of the time reporting on the work of building party organizations in the homeland



The flag of the people's revolutionary government in the Wangougou guerrilla zone



한地帶를占據하고
自家天地를構成
現在間島駐在의軍力으로는
徹底着手가 困難할듯

在滿各民族糾合
人民○○政府組織

婦女, 兒童團代表도參加
延吉○○○○○結成
共產黨各團體六百名集合코
間島各警察緊張活動

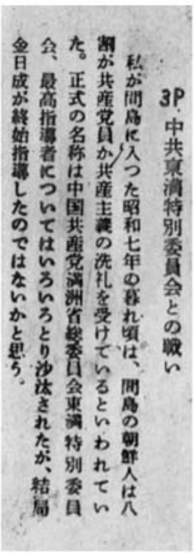
Newspapers of the time reporting on the establishment of guerrilla zones



A panorama of Sishuiping in the Gayahe guerrilla zone, where the first people's revolutionary government was established



Materials for political study published in the guerrilla base



3P. 中共東満特別委員会との戦い

私が間島に入った昭和七年の暮れ頃は、間島の朝鮮人は八割が共産党員か共産主義の洗礼を受けているといわれていた。正式の名称は中国共産党満洲省総委員会東満特別委員会、最高指導者についてはいろいろとり沙汰されたが、結局金日成が終始指導したのではないかと思う。

Reminiscences of an officer of the government-general of Korea concerning the activities of the party organizations in guerrilla zones

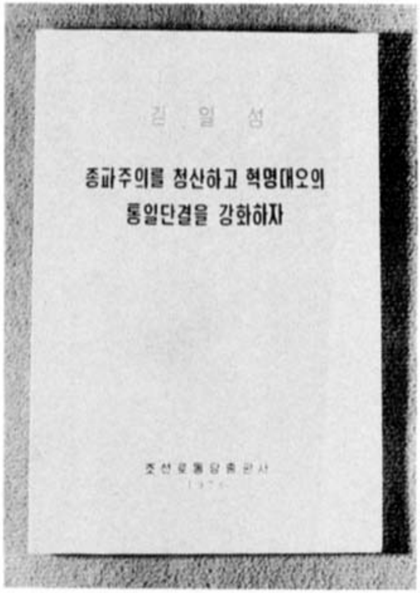




A guerrilla army barracks in Dahuangwai and an underground passageway



Ri Ki Dong (Pan Qing-you)**, an inspector from the Comintern**



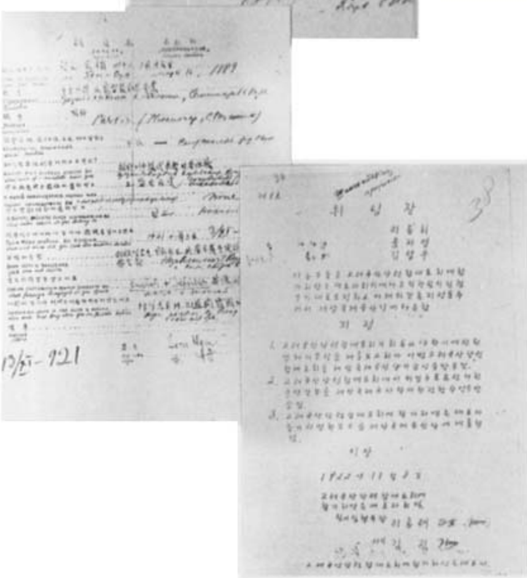
A pamphlet published on the basis of a treatise which I wrote in May 1933

A panorama of the Xiaowangqing area





Historical materials relating to endeavours to obtain assistance from the Comintern



Materials preserved in the archives of the Comintern





Hong Pom Do

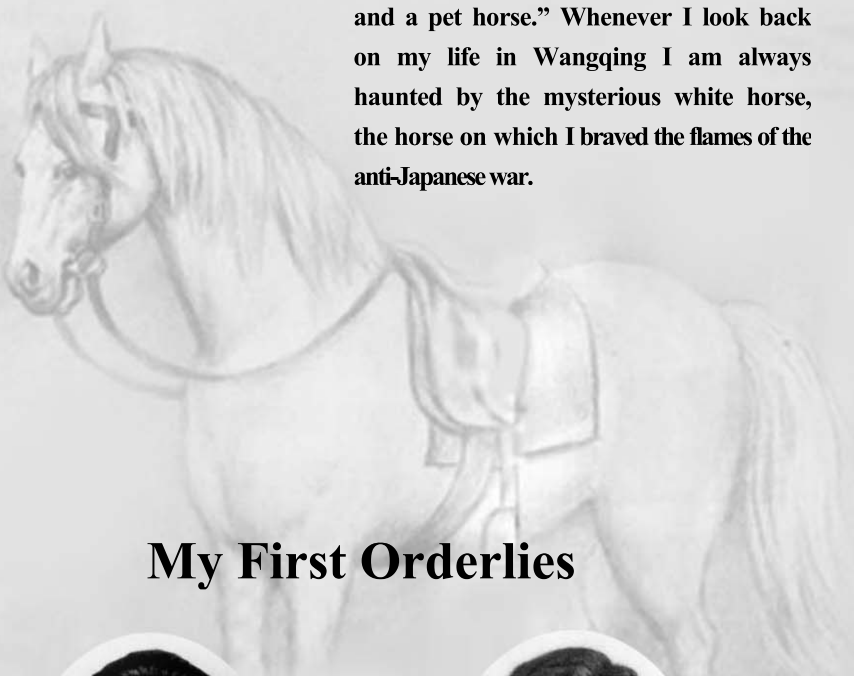


Ri Tong Hwi



Ryo Un Hyong

Looking Back on the Past



I prefer the expression "a faithful horse and a pet dog" to "a faithful dog and a pet horse." Whenever I look back on my life in Wangqing I am always haunted by the mysterious white horse, the horse on which I braved the flames of the anti-Japanese war.

My First Orderlies



Jo Wal Nam



Ri Song Rim



Platoon leader O Paek Ryong



Choe Kum Suk, who nursed me devotedly

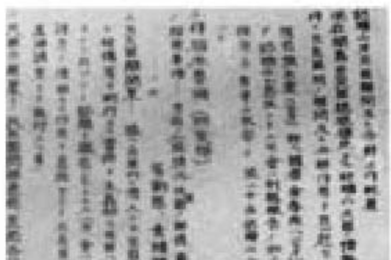
The Anti-Japanese Allied Front between Korean and Chinese Peoples Was Achieved at the Cost of Blood



A secret document of the time on the arrest and slaughter during the Japanese imperialist national-alienation moves of the guerrillas who had been dispatched to the Chinese anti-Japanese units



A photograph of Ri Kwang's family
(He is at the far right in the back row.)



Secret instructions of the Japanese imperialists to divide and alienate the revolutionary ranks



Japanese imperialists' material concerning the battle of the Dongning county town (1934)



Wu Yi-cheng

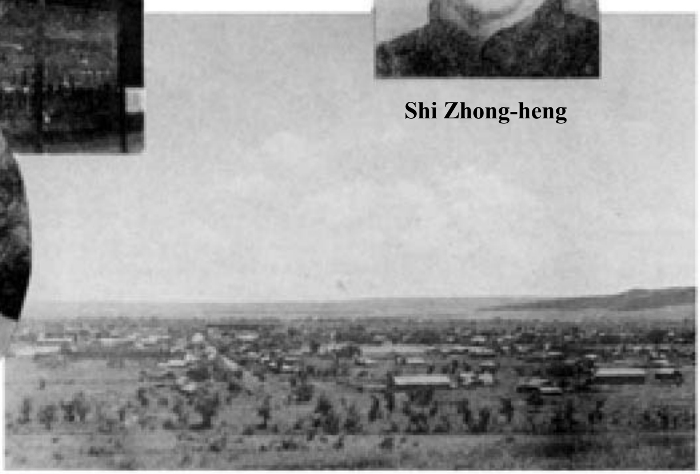


Shi Zhong-heng





Chai Shi-rong



The building where the machinegun was sited and a view of the town at the time of the battle of the Dongning county town

During the Time in the Guerrilla Zone



The battleground of the defence of Yaoyinggou

The battleground of the defence of Naitoushan

The battleground at Sandaohezi



Yun Chang Bom



Jang Ryong San



Ryu Ran Han



Kim Yong Hwan



Jon Man Song



Choe In Jun



The battleground in defence of Xiaowangqing



Inhabitants of the guerrilla zone rebuilding houses on sites reduced to ashes by a "punitive" operation

Various Kinds of Weapons and Ammunition, Medical Instruments and Medicines Made by Ourselves in the Guerrilla Zone



Son Won Gum



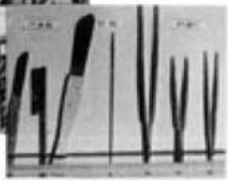
Pak Yong Sun



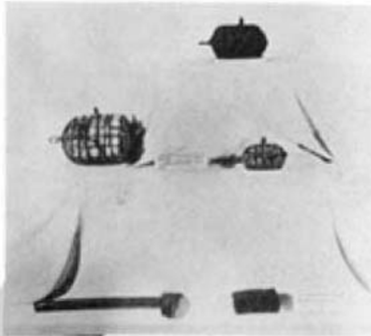
Pak Tu Gyong

A sewing-machine used in making military uniforms

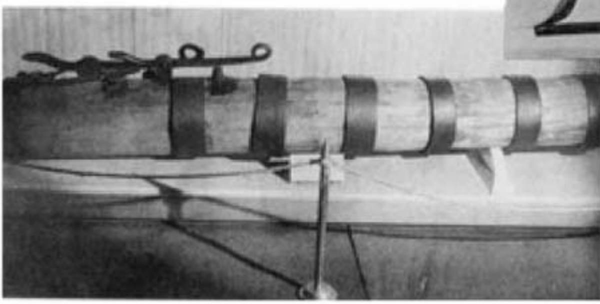


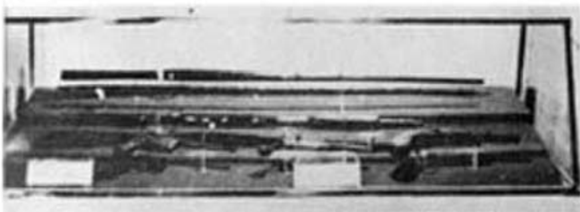
Medicines and medical instruments



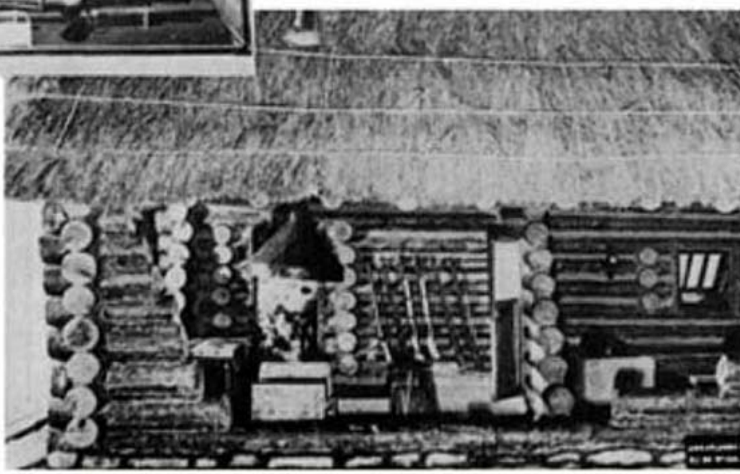
Yongil bombs and the im- plements used for making them



A wooden gun



Various weapons

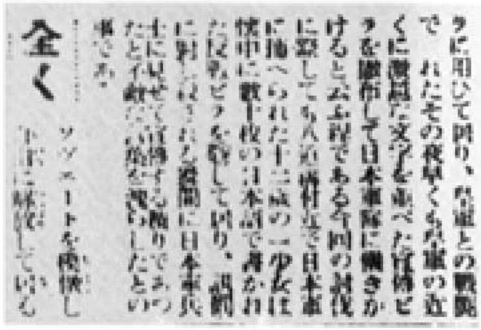


The arsenal in the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone (model)

For the Future of the Revolution



Kim Kum Sun



Newspaper reports on the heroic death of Kim Kum Sun



The *Lives of the Anti-Japanese Martyrs in Northeast China* (May 1936) made famous the name of Kim Kum Sun, an anti-Japanese girl heroine



Ryu Kwan Sun

Born aloft on the nationwide March First Popular Uprising, Ryu Kwan Sun became a daughter of the nation at the age of 16 and under the banner of Juche, Kim Kum Sun became an anti-Japanese heroine of Korea at the age of 9. There are many other young flowers who remain immortal. In what way can we console the souls of the young martyrs, the souls of those who left us too early and whose images cannot even be reproduced in imaginary pictures?



Ri Sun Hui



Pak Kil Song



A Children's Corps school in the Yulangcun guerrilla zone

The Korean People's Revolutionary Army





Dongfang Zazhi (Oriental Magazine, March 1935) **containing an article stating that there are 3,000 soldiers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in Jiandao**

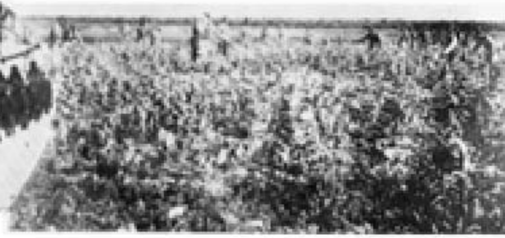


Houses fired during a "punitive" operation by the Japanese troops



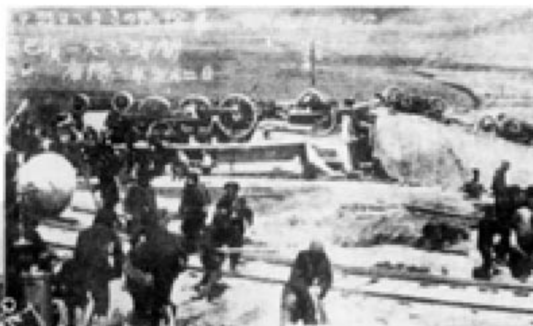
Aerial reconnaissance by the Japanese imperialists





Japanese troops trampling down the fields in the guerrilla base

Japanese troops on the rampage during a "punitive" operation against a guerrilla base





Japanese military trains destroyed by a guerrilla army attack



A watchtower on the western fort at the time of the Luozigou battle



The house from which I commanded the Luozigou battle



Han Hung Gwon



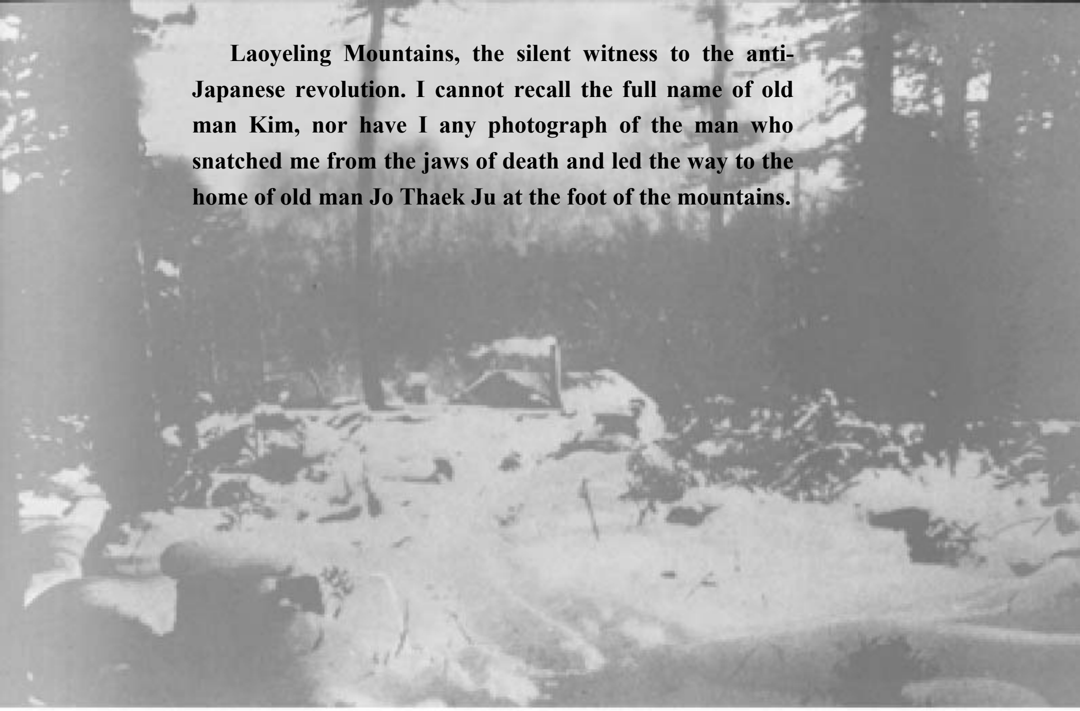
Choe Kum San



Jo To On

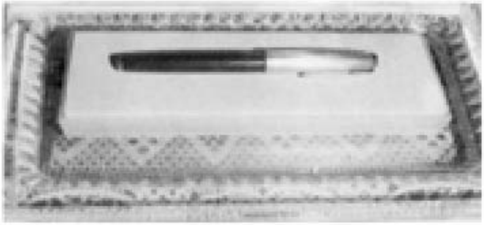


Reports on a defeat of the Japanese imperialists by a guerrilla army attack



Laoyeling Mountains, the silent witness to the anti-Japanese revolution. I cannot recall the full name of old man Kim, nor have I any photograph of the man who snatched me from the jaws of death and led the way to the home of old man Jo Thaek Ju at the foot of the mountains.

Laoyeling







The horse, which was captured at the battle of Laoheishan and given to old man Jo Thaek Ju, later returned to me as a fountain-pen on April 15, 1961.

Old man Jo Thaek Ju and his daughter-in-law Choe Il Hwa

Revolutionary Bonds Formed in the Wilds of Manchuria



Wang De-lin



Tong Chang-rong



Zhou Bao-zhong



Yang Jing-yu



Wang De-tai

Anti-Japanese Patriots Who Shared the Same Ordeal



The martyr Kang U Gyu (1855-1920), **who threw a bomb at the Japanese governor-general in Korea at the age of 65**



The martyr Sin Chae Ho (1880-1936), **who died for his country in Lushun prison, leaving many historical and literary writings**



The martyr Ri Pong Chang (1900-1932), **taking an oath before leaving for Tokyo to kill the Emperor of Japan**



The martyr Yun Pong Gil (1908-1932), **who killed and wounded many enemies including the commander of the Japanese forces in Shanghai**

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 9. THE FIRST EXPEDITION TO NORTH MANCHURIA

CHAPTER 7

The People's World

The Home Base

The Enemy's Ground by Day
Our Ground by Night

The Choice between the Soviet and the
People's Revolutionary Government

The Man from the Comintern

The Memory of a White Horse

February 1933–February 1934

1. The Home Base

In mid-February of 1933, guided by old man Ma, we marched towards the Wangqing guerrilla zone. When they reached the road, the 18 guerrillas, who had spent the long tedious hours of the last 20 days in the mountain hut in constant discussions of political affairs, lengthened their stride in high spirits. Although the traces of the winter-long trials they had undergone still lingered about them, the marching column was lively and moved at a brisk pace.

It is said that the inhabitants of Wangqing, if asked nowadays what are the distinctive features of their district, will remark wittily that the place is noted for the long speeches made by their county chief, the long primary school buildings, and the long valleys. This comment must be the brainchild of a local humorist fond of cracking jokes to express his feeling of attachment to the place.

If such a witty phrase had occurred to me at the time in 1933 when my comrades-in-arms asked me what Wangqing was like, I could have given them a chance to laugh following their terrible hardships. But I merely replied that it was a place where many exiles had settled.

By exiles I meant revolutionaries.

In Wangqing the anti-Japanese independence struggle had raged more fiercely than in the other counties of the Jiandao area, even from the early years. It was in this county that Hong Pom Do, a famous veteran commander of the volunteers' army, dealt a crushing blow to the Japanese "punitive" forces, and it was here too that Korea's Independence Army under the northern political and military administration headed by So Il, Kim Jwa Jin and Ri Pom Sok had established its base. It was in this county that Ri Tong Hwi set about the training of cadres for the Independence Army.

The vigorous activity of the Independence Army and the frequent appearance of independence fighters in this area had awoken the inhabitants' national consciousness and stimulated them to fight for their country against the Japanese.

As the tide of the Independence Army movement receded and the independence fighters withdrew into the Maritime Province of Siberia and Soviet-Manchurian border districts, the leadership of the national liberation struggle in the Wangqing area gradually passed into the hands of the communists, and the main trend of the struggle shifted from nationalism to communist movement. On the patriotic soil which had been fertilized by the blood of the nationalists, the forerunners of a new ideological trend developed the communist movement.

For all this, the motive force of the struggle remained basically unchanged. The overwhelming majority of the nationalists became

converts to the communist movement. The ranks of the communist movement thus included not only those who had, from the outset, taken the communist path, but also those nationalists who had gradually come to accept communism. It would have been impossible to launch the communist movement if it had been restricted to people free of all political taint. This is the principle of inheritance and innovation, one of the principles which have guided us in the development of the revolution. Communist ideology is the acme of human thought, and the communist movement is the highest stage of the revolutionary movements, but it would be a mistake to think, for this reason, that the communist movement starts and develops from a *tabula rasa.*

In any case, Wangqing was famous for its long record of anti-Japanese struggle, for the favourable mood among its masses and its firm political footing. It was also located near the six towns in the northern frontier region of Korea, and adjacent to Yanji and Longjing, which were the centres of the patriotic cultural enlightenment movement in the Jiandao area. These circumstances presented various advantages. The saying has it that deep pools attract fish, and this place naturally attracted many revolutionaries.

In those days people used to say; those who wish to work their way through university should go to Japan, those who wish to eat bread should go to the Soviet Union, and those who wish to work for the revolution should go to Jiandao. This reflected the thinking of the young people of Korea in those years, when they regarded east Manchuria as the theatre of battle for national liberation and

aspired to join the struggle there.

Going to Jiandao was as dangerous as approaching the opening of a pillbox, but we marched straight towards the pillbox without hesitation in order to forward the triumph of the revolution.

We marched with light steps towards the guerrilla zone, not because a sumptuous meal or comfortable beds awaited us, but because there we would find the comrades and people with whom we would share life and death, the ground which we would tread with the step of freedom, and a land of our own, which defied the ordinances of the Japanese Emperor and the decrees of the governor-general.

By February 1933, when we advanced towards Zhuanjiaolou under the guidance of old man Ma, the work of developing guerrilla bases in many parts of east Manchuria had been almost finished, and they had begun to demonstrate the effect they could have.

To establish the guerrilla bases and use them as a source of strength to launch a powerful armed struggle was one of the major policies adopted by the Korean communists at their winter meeting at Mingyuegou. At this meeting we had stated that in order to launch a campaign of armed resistance we must establish our positions, which was simply an expression of our intention to develop guerrilla bases.

At the meeting at Xiaoshahe in the spring of 1932 we raised the matter again, as a separate item on the agenda, and discussed seriously how we could develop the guerrilla bases in the form of

liberated areas–a matter which had already been discussed at the Mingyuegou meeting the previous winter. After the meeting at Xiaoshahe, we sent able leaders to different parts of the Jiandao area and increased the tempo of revolutionary training for the rural villages. This was the first stage in our work of establishing the guerrilla bases.

The revolutionized rural areas had served as temporary bases for the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army pending the establishment of the guerrilla zones, and they provided the ground on which to develop the guerrilla bases. One guerrilla base after another had been developed in the places we had selected as most suitable at the Mingyuegou meeting in winter, that is, in the mountainous areas around Antu, Yanji, Wangqing, Helong and Hunchun–Niufudong, Wangougou, Hailangou, Shirengou, Sandaowan, Xiaowangqing, Gayahe, Yaoyinggou, Yulangcun, Dahuanggou and Yantonglazi. All this was achieved through the titanic efforts of the Korean communists and at the cost of their blood in a fierce struggle against the enemy.

The blood spilt and the efforts dedicated to the establishment of these guerrilla bases in the area along the Tuman River by the Korean communists Ryang Song Ryong, Ri Kwang, Jang Ryong San, Choe Chun Guk, Ju Jin, Pak Tong Gun, Pak Kil, Kim Il Hwan, Cha Ryong Dok, Kang Sok Hwan, An Kil, Ri Kuk Jin, Ri Pong Su and others will be long remembered in history.

Prominent figures of the time were quick to assemble in the guerrilla bases in the Jiandao area, travelling from the homeland

and abroad. Many people came to the Wangqing area, including Kim Paek Ryong, Jo Tong Uk, Choe Song Suk, Jon Mun Jin and other communists of north Manchuria, who settled at Xiaowangqing. The new inhabitants of Xiaowangqing also included communists and independence fighters who had been operating in the Maritime Province of Siberia, as well as the people who, after many years of underground activity in the enemy-held area, had moved here because their identity had been exposed, and patriots and Marxists who, on hearing that Jiandao was the centre of the Korean revolution, had crossed the border from the homeland.

The guerrilla bases in east Manchuria thus became the assembly area for the elite who were firmly resolved to work for the revolution, or already tempered by experience of the practical struggle. Therefore, the political character of the population was as transparent as the limpid water of the River Dawangqing. In terms of their morale and determination, each of them was a match for a hundred.

Exploiting the favourable conditions created by the establishment of this strategic centre of the revolution, the Korean communists expanded the ranks of the guerrillas, established party and Young Communist League organizations, the Anti-Imperialist Union, the Peasants' Association, the Anti-Japanese Women's Association, the Children's Corps, the Red Guards and the Children's Vanguard, i.e., organizations uniting various sections of the population or paramilitary organizations, in preparation for

resistance struggle involving the entire people. Organs of the revolutionary government were established in every district of the guerrilla zones. They set about building homes for the people, and providing them with genuine democratic rights and freedoms which their ancestors had never experienced. They were true champions of the people's interests. The revolutionary government distributed land among the people, guaranteed them the rights to work, free education and free medical care, and thus built a society in which, for the first time in history, everyone enjoyed equality, and everyone supported and led each other forward, a society in which the noble morality of mutual respect prevailed. In the guerrilla zone there were neither rich people who threw their weight about nor poor people who were weighed down by the heavy burden of debts and taxes.

The guerrilla bases were vibrant with a rapturous enthusiasm which no suffering or hardship could ever dampen. It was the optimistic enthusiasm of people who, completely free from the fetters of social oppression, were building an independent new life. The happiness of the peasants, who danced to the beat of gongs as they drove in the stakes to mark off their plots of the land distributed by the people's revolutionary government, heralded the approach of the greatest event of the century, that sweeping transformation of the world which was first effected by the Korean communists in the wilderness of Jiandao. Their life went on amid continued trials such as had already cost constant bloodshed and sacrifice, but the people's dreams of a bright future gave them

hope and inspired their songs.

The guerrilla bases in the Jiandao area, a tall citadel in one corner of the East, were writing a magnificent new chapter in the history of national liberation in defiance of the enemy's constant attacks. They became a symbol of future happiness winning the adoring admiration of people in the homeland. Wherever they lived, and whatever their ideals, the Korean people regarded this citadel, built by the communists at the cost of their own blood, as their only beacon-light and gave it heartfelt support and encouragement.

In short, the guerrilla zones inspired the people with hope, optimism and joy; they were the land of promise, the promise of the happiness dreamed of by the people since time immemorial.

The guerrilla bases became a source of constant headaches for the top brass of the imperial headquarters in Tokyo. Having guerrilla zones located just across the Tuman River, on the northeastern boundary of Korea, was a sore point for the enemy. Takagi Takeo[1] once aptly described the Jiandao area as the "centre of resistance against Manchukuo and Japan as well as a communist artery that runs from the north to Japan through Korea."

Japanese militarists called the guerrilla bases in east Manchuria a "cancer destructive to Oriental peace," an expression which clearly reflected their fear of the guerrilla zone.

The Japanese imperialists feared the zone, not because the area was particularly extensive, or because a large communist force capable of overpowering their Kwantung Army was encamped

there, or because there was any possibility of a shell launched from Jiandao falling upon the roof of the royal palace or the imperial headquarters in Tokyo. They dreaded it because Koreans who harboured a bitter hatred for the Japanese made up the vast majority of the population in that region, and most of these Koreans were committed to the revolution strongly enough to give their lives without hesitation in the battle against Japanese domination.

The fact that more than 90 per cent of the communists and Young Communist League members in that region were Koreans is sufficient to explain why the rulers of Japan were so concerned by the guerrilla zone, regarding it as the greatest obstacle to their effective rule of Manchuria. Both the valorous generals of the Righteous Volunteers' Army, who had fought for over a decade in the homeland and in the wilderness of Manchuria against the "Ulsa Treaty" (the protectorate treaty concluded in 1905–Tr.) and the "annexation of Korea by Japan" forged by the Japanese militarists, and the surviving forces of the Independence Army, equipped as they were with matchlock rifles, were still operating in that region against the Japanese army and police.

The example of indissoluble fraternal ties between the Korean and Chinese communists was established there, and spread throughout Manchuria and China proper.

The guerrilla zone in Jiandao was not a "cancer destructive to Oriental peace," but the very beacon-light of that peace.

Our efforts to fulfil our strategic task of establishing guerrilla

bases for our revolution suffered a severe test when the Japanese militarist forces launched a wholesale "punitive" operation intended to smother the anti-Japanese armed struggle in its cradle. The result of their scorched-earth operations, however, was to speed up the establishment of guerrilla bases in Jiandao.

In the spring of 1932, the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria and their army forces in Korea discussed measures for dealing with what they called the Jiandao affair. The scheme was to dispatch a task force from their army in Korea to Jiandao in order to put down the revolutionary movement there. Accordingly a Jiandao task force composed of a regiment from the Japanese army division in Ranam, Korea, reinforced by the troops of the Kyongwon garrison, a cavalry troop, a field artillery battery and an air-force company, set out on an expedition to the four counties in east Manchuria where the flames of rebellion had raged during the harvest season and the seasonal spring food-shortage. The task force wrought havoc in the villages and towns, massacring and burning down the homes of those who rose in revolt for their country's freedom, for a life of independence.

The enemy's atrocities began with his assault on Dakanzi in the early part of April 1932 and drowned the fields and mountains of Wangqing in a bloodbath. Dakanzi was the village where Ri Kwang, Ri Ung Gol and Kim Yong Bom had led the harvest-time struggle and where Kim Chol, Ryang Song Ryong, Kim Un Sik, Ri Ung Man, Ri Won Sop and other comrades had captured weapons by raiding the public security office. As the large force of the Ranam 19th Division

pressed forward under cover of artillery fire, machineguns and aircraft, the national salvation army unit under the command of Wang De-lin, which was stationed in the village, withdrew in haste across Mt. Mopan to Xidapo, and the defence corps of the village surrendered to the "punitive" force.

Having occupied Dakanzi, the Japanese bombed the streets of Wangqing, and then attacked the town, killing its inhabitants, setting fire to houses and plundering them of property. Even the house of Li Heng-zhong, the richest man in Wangqing, who owned the largest estate in the district, was burnt down by the occupation force.

There followed the destruction of the villages of Deyuanli and Shangqingli.

The atrocities were so cruel and violent that the inhabitants of Wangqing composed a song about them;

On the sixth of April, 1932,
Dakanzi was attacked by the Japanese,
Shells bursting, roaring across the hills all around.
Under the rain of bullets and shrapnel
And bombs dropped from aircraft
The poor people were massacred.
Flames from Daduchuan soared into the sky,
The village of Deyuanli was reduced to ashes.
Innocent people were killed all over the fields
And the fields of Wangqing became deserted.

Proletarian masses of Manchuria, rise in unity
And fight the enemy.
Boiling blood drives us out to take the field
And raise the flag of victory.

Throngs of people who had lost their homes and families in this barbarous "punitive" operation, surged into the valleys of Xiaowangqing and Dawangqing. The Japanese aircraft even bombed the defenceless refugees. The crystal-clear water of rivers in Wangqing was suddenly stained red with blood. The guts of dead people drifted down the rivers.

The village of Zhuanjiaolou, to which we were guided by old man Ma, had suffered heavily from the atrocities perpetrated by the Jiandao task force. The barbarous beasts who fell upon the defenceless village had locked up scores of young people, women and children in a house and burnt them to death. The village had been instantly reduced to ashes. The fact that many counties in east Manchuria circulated a written protest, "An Appeal to Our Fellow Countrymen in Protest against the Massacre at Zhuanjiaolou!" indicates just how extensive and how brutal the "punitive" action was.

Zhuanjiaolou which is located near Luozigou and Xiaowangqing, one of the major bases of the revolution in Jiandao, had been under the powerful revolutionary influence of the anti-Japanese struggle from the early years. The valley, which was home to thousands of peasants, raftsmen and lumbermen, provided

fine ground for the activities of vanguard organizations such as the party, the Young Communist League and the revolutionary organizations of various sections of the population. During the spring struggle, these organizations had mobilized the masses in the destruction of the defence corps which had been entrenched in the village.

The members of the defence corps, frightened by this mass uprising, had fled into the mountains and become bandits.

The struggle had been successful, but 13 people were killed.

The heated vortex of these struggles transformed Zhuanjiaolou into a breeding-ground for stalwart revolutionaries. Jang Ryong San, who was the commander of the 3rd company of the Wangqing guerrilla unit, had worked as a raftsman between Zhuanjiaolou and Shanchakou. Hamatang, where Ri Kwang had worked in the guise of a headman of a hundred households, was only several miles from Zhuanjiaolou.

The enemy did not hesitate to destroy a whole village in order to kill one communist: they even had a motto, “Kill a hundred people to destroy one communist.” The three-point policy of killing everyone, burning everything, and plundering everything, which was applied in the attack launched on the liberated area in north China by Okamura Yasuji, commander of the Japanese forces in north China, during the Sino-Japanese war had, in fact, been applied earlier in the “punitive” expedition to Jiandao in the 1920s, and had culminated in a scorched-earth policy when the guerrilla zones throughout east Manchuria were destroyed in the

early 1930s.

The three-point policy and the so-called village-concentration policy, which had been adopted by the Japanese imperialists in Korea and Manchuria for the purpose of "severing the people from the bandits," were applied by the French colonialists in military operations to put down the Algerian resistance forces and were perfected by the Americans in Vietnam.

Sandaowan, Hailangou, Longjing, Fenglindong and all the other renowned revolutionary villages in Yanji County were littered with dead bodies. In Sanhanli and in its surrounding area in Hunchun County more than 1,600 houses were burnt down. The number of people massacred in Yanji County alone amounted to ten thousand. No words could be strong enough to condemn all the crimes committed by the Jiandao task force.

The Japanese even destroyed simple kitchen utensils, in addition to killing the inhabitants of Jiandao and plundering their property. They destroyed cooking pots and overturned under-floor heating facilities. They pulled down the houses remaining and carried off the structural elements to the town of Daduchuan. The refugees had to sleep in improvised grass huts and cook on hot stones, without cooking pots.

The villagers who were unable to flee were threatened with death if they would not allow themselves to be dragged to the towns of Dakanzi or Daduchuan.

The "punitive" force made no exceptions for landlords in applying their forced evacuation orders. It was no secret that a

considerable portion of the food supplies and other goods needed for the anti-Japanese guerrillas had come from landlords and propertied people. The enemy therefore attempted to cut off the source of these supplies and stifle the revolutionary army, already suffering from constant shortages of food and clothing.

Harassed by the enemy's tenacious pursuit, the revolutionary masses roamed the mountains, without eating regular meals. But the mountains did not always provide safe shelter. Even the deepest of the valleys had dead ends, where the refugees had to hide in the forest. In such situation a baby's cry meant death for everyone.

When the "punitive" troops were searching close to one group's hiding people, a woman gave breast to her baby and hugged it hard to prevent it crying and bringing destruction on the revolutionary masses. When the "punitive" troops withdrew, the woman found her baby was dead. Similar tragedies took place in every village and every valley of Jiandao.

To avoid such accidents, some women used to doze their babies with opium to keep them fast asleep. Unable to endure the ceaseless atrocities perpetrated by the "punitive" troops, some women even gave their beloved babies to strangers.

The women of this country suffered heart-rending trials for the sake of the revolutionary masses and their comrades-in-arms, for the sake of the anti-Japanese struggle which was dearer to them than their own lives.

Bourgeois humanists may mock at the maternal love of

communists, asking how a woman could be so cruel towards her baby or be so irresponsible with its life.

But they must not hold these women responsible for the deaths of their infants. If they knew how many bitter tears were shed as these women buried the soft bodies of their babies in dry leaves and left their babies in the care of strangers, and if they knew what deep scars were left in the hearts of these women, they would condemn and hate the Japanese imperialists who sent their human butchers to Jiandao. The crime of trampling upon the maternal love of this country's women was committed by none other than the fiends of Japanese militarism.

If she is to make amends for her past, Japan must repent of these crimes. Remorse for past crimes cannot, of course, be a pleasant feeling, but no matter how bitter or shameful such remorse may be, it will be much easier to bear than the heart-rending agony that our mothers and sisters felt as they were compelled to leave their own flesh and blood behind in the shadow of strangers' fences, or as they thrust lumps of opium down the throats of their babies. In demanding evidence of their past crimes, the rulers of Japan continue to mock the memory of millions of Koreans who were slaughtered by their army.

The revolutionary masses faced the alternative of being dragged down to urban communities by the Japanese or going deeper into mountains to live there and continue the fight.

How many of these Koreans who had abandoned their fertile

paddy-fields to come to Jiandao would obey the enemy's orders to move to towns which were under the rule of the Japanese army?

Most of the inhabitants of Jiandao were poor peasants who had been deprived of their livelihood by the Japanese colonialists, and left their home districts in pursuit of the promised land like *Ryultoguk*.[2] Although bled white by the local officials and landlords, the poor peasants had reclaimed steep hill slopes and valleys in the mountain ranges of Laoyeling and Haerbaling, removing the stones and pulling up tree roots by dint of herculean efforts. Exhausting as slash-and-burn farming was, and poor as they remained, these peasants had been contented with their lot simply because they were free of molestation by the Japanese. Which of them would ever obey the Japanese orders to follow them to towns, leaving behind homes and lands which they had made fertile with their own sweat and blood? This was the test set for the people of Wangqing who had experienced the massacre.

A few people, terrified into submission by the enemy's atrocities, began to move down to the towns. But the overwhelming majority, who yearned to see a new world, moved deeper into the mountains in spite of the menace of the enemy. People who only yesterday had shared joy and sorrow in one mind for the revolution in the same village were now parting with each other, some going to towns and others to mountains.

The people who chose the mountains moved to the great forests of Xiaowangqing and Dawangqing, 25 miles away from the

Wangqing county town (Baicaogou). It was around this time that the family of Ri Chi Baek moved from Zhongqingli to Macun.

The Wangqing county party committee and other county-level organs had established their bases in Xiaowangqing. The east Manchuria ad hoc committee which had been operating by moving between Xilinhe in Yanji County, Taipinggou, Wangougou and Beidong finally settled in the spring of 1933 in the valley of Lishugou at Xiaowangqing, which became the revolution's centre and capital in Jiandao. The tide of history brought ourselves and the Chinese party, our revolution and the Chinese revolution, together, and we came to share a single pulse.

The Wangqing guerrilla base consisted of five organized revolutionary districts, including district No. 1, which included Yaoyinggou under its jurisdiction, and district No. 2, which had Macun and Shiliping under its control.

In those days the Wangqing guerrillas were grouped into three companies; their prominent commanders and leaders were Ri Kwang, Ryang Song Ryong, Kim Chol, Jang Ryong San, Choe Chun Guk and Ri Ung Man.

That was what I learned on my arrival in Wangqing, from a briefing given by Ryang Song Ryong, one of the founders of the Wangqing guerrilla force, and Ri Yong Guk, secretary of the county party committee. These comrades had shown me around the Wangqing guerrilla base when I visited the place to acquaint myself with the situation there in the autumn of 1932.

At that time, as I made the rounds of the guerrilla zones in the

Wangqing County I had given guidance to the work of the primary party organizations, the Anti-Japanese Association, the Anti-Japanese Women's Association and other mass organizations. I had also received reports from the political workers operating in the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units.

Also around this time we had given a short training course on explosive weapons for workers from the munitions factories in different counties of east Manchuria and for the commanders of the guerrilla army.

In those days the leaders of Wangqing County were racking their brains in the search for solutions to the food problem. More than one thousand people had thronged into the narrow valley at Xiaowangqing, where there were only a few dozen houses. The food reserves were too small to feed them all. Now and then the guerrillas had attacked the enemy and captured food, but the amounts were not enough to satisfy the hunger of the many people in the bases. The contribution of the harvest from the small plots of arid land in the guerrilla zone was also negligible.

In these circumstances, it was suggested that the food problem could be solved for the moment by harvesting the crops in no-man's land. By no-man's land I mean the deserted farm lands between the guerrilla bases and the enemy-ruled areas.

There were deserted villages near Xiaowangqing and Dawangqing. Unable to endure the atrocities perpetrated by the barbarous "punitive" force, the villagers had fled, some of them to the enemy area, and others to the guerrilla zone, leaving their crops

unharvested. Some of the crops belonged to the landlords and reactionaries who had fled to the enemy area, and some of them belonged to the peasants whom the Japanese had forced at bayonet-point to move to Baicaogou and Daduchuan.

The abandoned crops were also coveted by those who had fled to the enemy area. The landlords and reactionaries came every day with horse-drawn carts and other vehicles under the escort of armed self-defence corps men, harvested the crops and carried them away. Sometimes they even approached the guerrillas' threshing floor and opened fire.

In view of this, we decided to form harvesting teams in all the guerrilla districts and mobilize all the people in the base to gather the crops in no-man's land without delay. We informed the Wangqing people of the decision and discussed the measures required for its implementation with them. The harvesting team began reaping the crops at the entrance of Xiaowangqing and advanced towards Daduchuan. The grain was threshed as soon as it was reaped, then it was stored for distribution to the inhabitants of the guerrilla zone.

Harvesters working in the fields below the village of thirteen households had to be protected by the Red Guards against the self-defence corps, which was equipped with rifles capable of taking five cartridges at a time. There were occasionally fierce engagements between the two sides, who fired over the heads of the harvesters. We were deeply moved by the heroism of the Wangqing people who worked day and night to gather the crops at

the risk of their lives.

Arduous as the struggle was, I was satisfied, as I left Xiaowangqing, that everything in the base was being done as we had intended.

On my way back to the guerrilla base, I set myself two major tasks. The first was to achieve a large-scale expansion of the ranks of the guerrillas and the second was to intensify the efforts of the united front to rally the patriotic forces of all social strata in line with the new situation, in which the theatre of our operations was shifting to the area of the Tuman River. We also needed to work with the anti-Japanese units of the Chinese nationalists.

Having guided us as far as Zhuanjiaolou, old man Ma returned to Luozigou.

The jovial fellow, whom the Anti-Japanese Association provided as our guide in place of old man Ma, told us an interesting story about the small units of the Wangqing guerrillas, and how they had defeated the Japanese "punitive" troops that had invaded Yaoyinggou and Sishuiping.

The following day, we marched into the guerrilla zone of Yaoyinggou, the centre of Wangqing district No. 1, with the flag of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army flying and bugles blowing at the head of our advancing column.

Hong Yong Hwa, a woman whose nephew Choe Kum San was my orderly in later years before he was killed in battle, came running up to the roadside with about 20 members of the Children's Corps, and they welcomed us, waving their hands. She

was in charge of the work with women under the party committee of Wangqing district No. 1. She was highly respected by the soldiers and the people for her devoted work for the guerrillas and the Chinese anti-Japanese units.

That day the people of Yaoyinggou prepared millet cakes and buckwheat noodles for us. In the evening they invited us to a performance given by the Children's Corps.

Ri Ung Gol, head of the organizational section of the Wangqing district No. 1 party committee, watched the soldiers and people enjoy their party together with tears in his eyes. "General Kim Il Sung," he said, "we have been hearing news of your unit for many months. We heard that, after your expedition to south Manchuria, you attacked Dunhua and Emu in north Manchuria. The people here have been waiting for your unit for a long time. Now our hearts feel strong."

I left the celebration and followed him to the office of the district party committee. We spent hours in discussion of the work of the guerrilla zone. Our attention was focused on how we should go about expanding the party and the other revolutionary organizations in places like Zhuanjiaolou, and how we should arm all the people in the guerrilla zone.

When we were elaborating measures for the defence of the guerrilla zone, a messenger came to us with a secret note from the enemy-ruled area. The note stated briefly that the Japanese garrison troops at Daxinggou would attack the guerrilla zone the next day.

"They must be coming to avenge themselves on the guerrillas who attacked them in December last year," Ri Ung Gol remarked with a wry smile, as if he were responsible for the enemy's attempt to attack Yaoyinggou. "Those devils can't even show proper respect for guests who have made a journey of hundreds of miles. We were planning to give your unit a few days' good rest before you left. What an unfortunate coincidence!"

"Oh no!" I said. "It's a happy coincidence. The men's hands have been itching after all these months without a fight. It seems the moment has come for the enemy to pay for the blood spilt by our people at Dakanzi, Zhuanjiaolou, Deyuanli and Sanhanli." I sent a messenger to Ri Kwang, telling him to transfer his unit to Yaoyinggou in a hurry.

Ri Ung Gol puffed at his hand-rolled cigarette in agitation for a while, then stood up to go to the party and summon the commander of the Red Guards. It was clear from his expression that he had decided to give orders for a general mobilization.

Smiling, I took him by the sleeve and pulled him back into his seat.

"Comrade Ung Gol, you are going to tell the Red Guards that the enemy is coming, aren't you? The party seems to be at its height at the moment. So don't disturb them, please. Send them all home in an hour and let them sleep well until early next morning. And I, too, will send my men for a sound sleep early tonight."

It might seem contrary to normal military practice to allow the

men and the people to enjoy themselves, instead of alerting them, when we knew that the enemy was going to attack us very soon. It was quite natural that the head of the organizational section of the district party committee, who was also in charge of military affairs, should glance at me uneasily.

Nonetheless, we kept the message about the enemy's intentions to ourselves. The men were sent to their beds as I had suggested. I did not wish to excite them when they were still tired from the march. I knew quite well that no stout-hearted man could sleep when his spirits had been aroused by combat orders.

"At least tonight I must not let their sleep be disturbed. How many sleepless nights they have already spent during the last winter!" This was the thought uppermost in my mind that night. Perhaps it was a case of indulgence inappropriate for a guerrilla commander. In any case, the men were fast asleep by eleven o'clock.

Our guide from Zhuanjiaolou and the messenger from the enemy-held area could not get to sleep until midnight, probably because they did not feel sure that my decision was correct. Ri Ung Gol, head of the organizational section, too, tossed and turned in his bed.

"On our march I found the hills at the entrance to Yaoyinggou fascinating. What about giving battle there?" I suggested in whisper. "There's a motor road running along the foot of the hills, isn't there?"

Ri Ung Gol responded to my words by sitting up. "You mean

the hills west of Dabeigou? They are a natural fortress."

We were still discussing this question at about four o'clock in the morning.

Not long afterwards we climbed the hills, which were the gate to Yaoyinggou, so to speak. The commander of the Red Guards and the member of the Anti-Japanese Association from Zhuanjiaolou accompanied us. The southern sides of the hills were craggy cliffs, along the bottom of which ran a vehicular road. Parallel to the road flowed a river called the Xiaotonggou. The hills were full of rocks which provided natural shelters for the guerrillas.

We built up piles of stones between crags and then called together all the men of the Red Guards from Yaoyinggou and my unit and some members of the special detachment and took them to the hills. I told them to dig themselves in on the frozen ground and gave them combat orders, which concluded with an encouraging speech to the following effect:

Our ancestors used to describe such features of the terrain as impregnable. Highly advantageous to the defenders, and disadvantageous to the attackers! An impregnable fortress is a fine thing, but I have more confidence in your combat efficiency. Comrades, sing the song of tragedy no more, but let the enemy pay dearly today for the blood shed by our people. Blood for blood!

That day, more than 80 Japanese troops who were advancing on four trucks into the valley of Yaoyinggou, were caught in our ambush and scores of them were killed or wounded.

The next day, the Japanese garrison troops at Daxinggou launched an all-out attack on Yaoyinggou again, only to suffer heavy casualties before they fled.

That was the first battle we fought in a guerrilla zone in Jiandao. It was probably named the defensive battle of the Yaoyinggou guerrilla zone by the historians.

On the evening of the following day the inhabitants of Yaoyinggou celebrated the victory in the village of Dabeigou. I still remember the event. The representatives of the various organizations delivered speeches of passionate congratulation, waving their fists in the air. Of course, I also made an impassioned speech that night.

I think it was during that winter or the previous autumn that I met O Jin U at Yaoyinggou. On that occasion the villagers of Xiaobeigou held a welcome meeting in our honour at the Children's Corps school where O Jin U was working as an instructor. He occasionally looks back with deep emotion upon our first meeting, saying that he was strongly impressed by me as I spoke then, holding a Model 38 rifle in my hand, with the butt resting on the ground. He was then fifteen or sixteen years old, and he would follow at my heels, toying with the Mauser that hung on my waist. He seemed to be very envious of it. We were all equipped with Model 38 rifles or with the most modern pistols.

I asked O Jin U if he wished to join the guerrilla army. He said he had applied, but had not been accepted because he was too young. We accepted him into the 4th Wangqing company the

following year or the year after, and took him on an expedition to north Manchuria.

While we were preparing to leave for Xiaowangqing after having repulsed the enemy and acquainted ourselves with the work of the party and mass organizations, a messenger arrived with a summons for us to go to Macun to discuss an important military matter.

We left Yaoyinggou immediately.

On our arrival at Xiaowangqing we were received by Wang Run-cheng, alias Ma Ying, and two other men. He was more often known by another nickname–Wang *danaodai*–which meant a man with an unusually large head.

Dagezi and some other personnel of the guerrilla zone guided me to the foot of the hill at the back of Macun and the house of old man Ri Chi Baek where I stayed and where I met the representatives of the east Manchuria party committee. *Dagezi* is Ri Yong Guk's nickname, it means a long fellow. He was the secretary of the Wangqing county party committee at the time. There was a bachelors' quarters which had been made into a "travellers' home," but I was persuaded to stay at the old man's house because the "travellers' home" was crowded and noisy. Ri Chi Baek was Kim Jung Gwon's father-in-law, and the name of the old man's wife was So Song Nyo.

Ri Chi Baek's family were all patriots and revolutionaries.

In his house I dressed in *dabushanzi* (a Chinese gown–Tr.) for talks with Wang Run-cheng and his company.

"Congratulations upon your arrival in Wangqing!" Wang *danaodai* greeted me.

"I am glad to see you again," I replied, shaking his hands.

I was lucky to meet a revolutionary who was an old acquaintance of mine in Wangqing, where I was a stranger.

I had first met him at Antu, when I was concentrating on work with the anti-Japanese units of the Chinese nationalists, following my return from the campaign in south Manchuria. In those days he and Chen Han-zhang had been working with the soldiers of Commander Meng's regiment of the national salvation army.

Commander Meng's regiment had moved from north Manchuria to the Antu area in order to make contact with Tang Ju-wu's units of the self-defence army in the Liaoning area and enter into cooperation with them. The Chinese communists who were working with Wu Yi-cheng in his national salvation army unit had been trying to extend the anti-Japanese struggle throughout Manchuria by arranging an alliance of the anti-Japanese forces in north and south Manchuria.

Commander Meng's regiment had been sent to Antu by Wu Yi-cheng on another mission to obtain opium needed to raise funds for military purposes. The Antu area was a major source of opium and insam (ginseng–Tr.). Tang Ju-wu had also sent his men to Antu with a view to establishing a monopoly of the opium trade in that area. In those days opium was used in place of currency.

"Comrade Kim Il Sung," Wang Run-cheng said half-jokingly at a meeting of the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee held at Ri

Kwang's house, "the success of the national salvation army units in cooperation with your unit in the attack on Dunhua and Emu can be attributed to opium. The large amount of opium that was obtained in Antu and distributed among my men had strengthened their morale."

We were familiar enough with each other to speak our minds frankly on such matters.

Wang helped us a great deal in the course of our work in Antu. He used to carry messages to maintain contact between myself and Hu Jin-min or Zhou Bao-zhong. Since he was in charge of propaganda in the national salvation army, he had had free access to the commander's headquarters, to say nothing of regimental, battalion and company headquarters. He was a good messenger for me and for the communists who had been posted to the national salvation army.

As was usually the case with intellectuals who had been trained in a normal school, Wang, though a man of large build, was gentle and good-natured. He had taken up the revolutionary cause during his normal school days at Ningan, under the influence of schoolmates who had studied in large cities like Beijing, Nanjing and Tianjin. His final commitment to the revolutionary cause was due especially to the influence of Comrade Pan, who was on the provincial party committee.

"Comrade Kim Il Sung," Wang said. "The revolution is raging fiercely in east Manchuria now, and in this situation we expect a great deal from you. We are very glad of your arrival in Wangqing

at a time when the revolution in east Manchuria needs able strategists to develop party work, guerrilla activities, and work with the national salvation army."

He analyzed the developments in north and east Manchuria in considerable detail, and we had a frank exchange of views concerning the tasks facing the party organizations in east Manchuria at that time. The most urgent task we discussed was the establishment of a system of unified command over the companies that had so far been operating autonomously in the different guerrilla zones, and also the increasing of our military forces and the improvement of their quality. This matter was also later discussed in detail with Tong Chang-rong.

As a result, the guerrilla companies in Wangqing were brought under the unified command of their battalion headquarters.

This was followed by a regrouping of the companies in other counties in east Manchuria into battalions, and by the reappointment of their commanders. These were preparations for the full-scale development of guerrilla warfare.

These were the impressive events that marked our arrival in Wangqing. We soon became used to the new surroundings. The sense of exotic newness we usually felt whenever we changed our theatre of activity soon gave way to an attachment to the new place and curiosity about it.

By 1933 I had lost nearly all the people dearest to me. The death of my mother had orphaned her three sons, and the sweet home of these three boys at the village of Xiaoshahe among the

field of reeds had been left deserted and filled with cobwebs. All that remained with me were my two younger brothers, who were in the charitable care of strangers, and my grandparents who had given their beloved sons to the country, and were now living in isolation at my old home in Mangyongdae, for which I felt a bitter nostalgia. My feelings of filial devotion to them could not reach out to the hearth of the home, and my desire to take loving care of my brothers was a source of futile worry.

The only place where the tender feelings of my heart could produce any effect was the guerrilla zone in which I was to fight. The people here would become as dear to me as my own grandparents, my own parents and my own brothers. In the personality of the mistress of the house, So Song Nyo, I rediscovered the warm character of my own mother, her love and benevolence.

Because of the enemy's constant blockade and "punitive" assaults, the guerrilla bases in east Manchuria faced numerous trials from the outset. In this historic land of Wangqing which is fixed for ever in my memory, many battles were fought, much blood was spilt, and we endured great agonies. Sometimes scores of people were killed, or scores of houses and barracks burnt down, in a single day. The hospitals were crowded with wounded soldiers and sick people. Food-shortages throughout the guerrilla zone and recurrent famine caused innumerable deaths. Sometimes an epidemic threatened the entire population of Jiandao with extinction.

In that part of the world there were neither shops, nor markets, nor merchants, nor any money in circulation. Here the law of value had no effect. Shoes and clothing for the population were obtained by capturing the enemy's supplies. From time to time Leftist deviation shook the guerrilla zone and plunged it into apprehension.

Nonetheless, all these difficulties by no means dominated life there. A new way of living in freedom and happiness–although in a somewhat limited and relative sense–together with the optimistic spirit of a people who had been liberated from the tyranny of the enemy, defined the main line of development in the guerrilla zone. The difficulties were enormous, but the morale of the soldiers and civilians was high. In this isolated region, beyond the reach of the administrative power of Manchukuo and Japan, the Korean communists created a culture and a morality which were more progressive and revolutionary than those in any other part of the world.

For this reason we treasured the guerrilla base with all our hearts.

The heroic action of our nation to defend the guerrilla base was displayed daily throughout the whole of east Manchuria.

The remote valley of northern Jiandao, where the day dawned in battle and the sun set in battle, the guerrilla base where a new way of life and a new ethics were beginning to thrive even amidst the thunder of bursting shells–this became my dear home.

2. The Enemy's Ground by Day; Our Ground by Night

On arrival at Macun, we were again accorded a hearty welcome, which I thought was more than we deserved. The news of our success in the battle at Yaoyinggou had quickly spread throughout Jiandao, and the inhabitants of Xiaowangqing greeted us with wild enthusiasm.

Life in the guerrilla zone, which was completely free from the enemy's rule, fascinated us.

However, not everything that happened in this new world was to my liking. We were not always pleased by the attitude to work and the way of thinking of some of the people at the helm of the revolution in Jiandao.

What surprised me most was the Leftist tendency that was spreading like an epidemic among revolutionaries in east Manchuria.

This tendency was especially conspicuous in the work of consolidating the guerrilla base.

When discussing the establishment of the guerrilla bases at

meetings held at Mingyuegou and Xiaoshahe we had agreed on the definitions of three types of bases–a full-scale guerrilla zone, a semi-guerrilla zone, and a base of activity–and on the need to ensure a reasonable balance among them.

Some communists in east Manchuria, however, expressed enthusiasm only for the development of a full-scale guerrilla zone in the form of a liberated area, and paid insufficient attention to the establishment of the semi-guerrilla zone and the base of activity. In the early days, efforts in Wangqing were also limited to the establishment of liberated areas. The Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone, for instance, was made into a Soviet district in the form of a liberated area which was as large as a county in our country today. This district was under the control of the revolutionary forces. In those days a full-scale guerrilla zone was also called a Soviet district.

Having the Soviet flag that symbolized a worker-peasant government over this wide territory, the cadres busied themselves with nothing in particular, simply creating a lot of fuss amid shouting "Revolution! Revolution!" They seldom fought outside the guerrilla zone, but spent day after day mouthing empty slogans about establishing a proletarian dictatorship and building a society for the proletariat. On public holidays they assembled in the yard of the soldiers' barracks or in a children's playground to dance Russian dances or sing the *May Day*. Sometimes cadres from the east Manchuria ad hoc committee and from the county would get together and have a heated argument about something or other.

We, too, spent the spring season in this atmosphere, unable to concentrate on anything. By degrees, however, we came to recognize this Left-wing communist mistake for what it was and seek ways of correcting it.

The guerrilla zone was crowded with people. During its formation thousands of refugees and exiles had flocked to the Wangqing base alone. The situation was similar in Hunchun, Yanji and Helong.

Such large numbers of people in a mountain valley with a very limited area of arable land posed the problem of food supplies. Everyone had to eat bean gruel. The beans were ground with a millstone and cooked, together with a pinch of grain, into a gruel. When this gruel was available, people might complain about it, but when these supplies ran out, we had to eat cakes made of pine bark which was first boiled in caustic soda water and then pounded, or else we were compelled to allay our hunger with boiled bracken, the shoots of *Atractylodes,* and the roots of broad bellflower, *Codonopsis lanceolata* or Solomon's seal. In spite of this, we sang revolutionary songs and made speeches, waving our fists in the air and calling on the people to overthrow imperialism, the pro-Japanese elements and the coterie of parasites. That was the way things were done in the early days of our life in the guerrilla base.

Of course, we engaged in a number of small battles, such as raids on police stations, attacks on the enemy's supply convoys, and counter-attacks on enemy forces which had invaded the guerrilla zone and from which we captured weapons. When we

returned from triumphant battles, the people shouted hurrah, and waved flags, but there were not many major battles, and we spent most of our time on standing guard on hilltops and protecting refugees. The territory under our control was large, but there were not many rifles or armed troops. A few rifles were allotted to each of the groups of soldiers, mostly in order to guard the base.

When we tried to increase the ranks of our armed soldiers, we were obstructed by weak-kneed secretaries or committee-members, who whined that the revolutionary army was not a united-front army, and that therefore, it must recruit only the most stalwart of the workers and peasants, not taking just anybody, in case it should become a rabble. In those days the anti-Japanese guerrillas in the Soviet area were called the worker-peasant guerrillas.

The defence of a territory that covered thousands of square kilometres was overtaxing the strength of a few companies. Since there were many gaps in the defence structure, the "punitive" forces could easily penetrate deep into our defences, and then thousands of the local inhabitants had to pack up their things and seek refuge. Such situations caused panic among the population almost every day.

The Leftist leaders, who regarded the size of our liberated territory as the decisive factor in the triumph of the revolution, were bent on maintaining a large territory, without any scientific assessment of the balance of hostile and friendly forces and were motivated only by their subjective desires. They even demarcated

the guerrilla zone and the enemy-ruled area in an artificial manner, by calling the former the "Red territory" and the latter the "White territory." They labelled the inhabitants of the enemy-held area as "reactionaries" and those in the intermediate zone as "double-faced" and suspected or rejected them for no reason. The people from the homeland were also treated as "reactionaries" and that was the most serious problem.

The women in the "Red territory" had their hair bobbed in order to distinguish themselves from those in the "White territory." A "Red" style of written and spoken language, songs, schools, education and media differed from the "White" style. People travelling to the "Red territory" from the "White territory" were strictly checked and even after interrogation, they were not allowed to go home immediately. Orders to deal with the "White" people who came to the "Red territory" as enemy spies were issued from the top of the hierarchy down to the Children's Corps organizations. Some of the members of the Wangqing county party committee harboured continuous ill feelings towards the people who had moved from the Xiaowangqing valley to the towns.

Some men of the Red Guards who had been posted as long-range look-outs at Dongricun once detained a peasant from Daduchuan who had come to buy an ox in the guerrilla zone. A Leftist element on the county party committee, informed of the interrogation of the unidentified peasant, told the investigators to press the suspect person to reveal his identity even by torturing him, saying that he might possibly be a spy. No matter how

severely they tortured him, the peasant insisted that he was not a spy. In fact, the peasant was neither a spy nor an agent of the enemy. But the Leftist wronged this innocent man and ordered his money to be confiscated.

Recollecting the undisclosed abuses perpetrated by the Leftists in the guerrilla zone in those days, Choe Pong Song, who worked for the Young Communist League in Wangqing for many years, said:

"The mere mention of the Leftist deviation always reminds me of events in the guerrilla zone in the early days. The Leftist abuses in Jiandao were really shocking. Once we guerrillas captured a cart-load of salt from the Japanese on the Wangqing Pass and took it to Xiaowangqing. This was probably at the time when you, Mr. President, were operating in south Manchuria. The carter was a Korean who led a hand-to-mouth existence in the lower depths of society. The Leftist elements labelled him as one of the 'double-faced' people and dealt with him as a criminal. They said he was a traitor because he had carried supplies for the Japanese. So naturally the people outside the guerrilla zone did not view the 'Red territory' in a favourable light. It was disgusting."

Such abuses as the punishment even of innocent people, without discriminating friend from foe, were also frequent in the guerrilla zones in other counties as well. The problem was very serious, because all these cursed acts were committed unhesitatingly in the noble name of the revolution, and they forced a large number of revolutionary people who were opposed to the

Japanese to move across to the "White territory."

The Leftists went so far as to arrest the relatives of old man Ri Chi Baek, when they came from Onsong to Shangqingli to attend the memorial ceremony for their parents, who had been killed in a "punitive" action by the enemy. The Leftists regarded them as "reactionary" people.

Whenever I saw cases of such injustice, I felt thoroughly ashamed. If a man who professes to be a communist punishes an innocent person by labelling him a reactionary, he is no longer a communist, but the worst of criminals.

Even after our arrival in Wangqing, these criminals continued to throw their weight about, behaving like "privileged revolutionaries" that no one could ever touch, and lording it over the masses.

Some people regarded the Soviet as everything, and this viewpoint was a serious problem to us. We came to the conclusion that if we were to preserve the base and develop the revolution, we must overcome the tendency of isolation and extend the theatre of our operations. In other words, it was imperative to abandon the shortsighted practice of clinging only to the defence of the guerrilla zone, and to form large elite forces so as to launch active military and political operations with freedom of mobility.

If the army was to launch full-scale operations, it had to be relieved of the burden of defending the base. We found a solution to this problem in creating and expanding many semi-guerrilla zones in the vast territory surrounding the full-scale guerrilla zone,

and in getting them to support it. We sought our breakthrough to fresh victory in the creation of semi-guerrilla zones.

I met and talked with Tong Chang-rong on many occasions in order to learn the experience of guerrilla zones established in China proper.

In the autumn of 1931, a Chinese Soviet Provisional Government was proclaimed in Ruijin, Jiangxi Province, and a Soviet zone was established. According to Tong Chang-rong, the central Soviet zone, in which the headquarters of the Chinese revolution was located, covered a very large area with millions of inhabitants and the military forces of several armies. Tong Chang-rong himself had experience of establishing a Soviet zone in Henan Province.

In those days the Red Army under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party numbered more than a hundrend thousand, and controlled a vast area extending from the southern part of Jiangxi Province to the northern area of Guangdong Province.

My interview with Tong Chang-rong convinced me that the experience of the establishment of the Chinese Soviet zone, which was equivalent to a sizable independent state in terms of territory and population, could not be applied to our efforts in the area on the Tuman River, and that establishing semi-guerrilla zones in the area that surrounded the full-scale guerrilla zone and in the northern region of Korea was the only way for the Korean communists active in the base of Jiandao to defend their revolutionary headquarters and launch a guerrilla war on a large scale.

The need for a semi-guerrilla zone became ever more pressing in the course of the practical armed struggle. The overwhelming task of defending a large area with a small force made it imperative to work out a fresh solution as soon as possible. If we had tried to formulate a theory at our desks by merely analyzing classical theory or drawing on the experiences of Russian Bolsheviks or the Chinese in Ruijin, we might merely have recognized the need for the guerrilla base of a new type, different from the type of the liberated area, but failed to press forward at speed with its establishment in a correct understanding of the pressing nature of this question.

The question of the semi-guerrilla zone was not taken up as a matter simply of the form of the base. The discussion reflected the ideological question of whether to establish the principle of Juche in the revolution by overcoming dogmatism and the worship of the great powers; it concerned the view to be taken of the masses and the need to overcome the Leftist error and accept as the motive force of the revolution the broad masses of the people who had been rejected as the "double-faced"; this was a serious question of direct relevance to the formation of the revolutionary forces, the question of whether or not to rally them in an anti-Japanese national united front.

By a semi-guerrilla zone we meant an area which would be partly under our own control and also partly under the control of the enemy, an area which would be under the enemy's formal territorial rule, but effectively, under our control, which would

provide support for the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, train revolutionary forces, including reserve forces for the guerrilla army, and play the role of a liaison between the guerrilla zone and the enemy-ruled area. Figuratively speaking, it would be governed by the enemy during daylight, but would come under our control at night.

The semi-guerrilla zone was suited to our struggle to build a revolutionary base. We found no significant examples of this type of guerrilla zone in the foreign experiences of guerrilla warfare. It was the development of our revolution that posed the establishment of the semi-guerrilla zone as a pressing task.

In mid-March 1933, we advanced to the area around Mt. Wangjae, Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province, in order to extend the armed struggle to the homeland and bring about a rapid acceleration of the Korean revolution as a whole, centring on the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The strategic objective we had maintained since we began fighting the Japanese was to spread the armed struggle to the homeland and liberate the country, an idea which nothing could ever erase from our minds. Creating a semi-guerrilla zone in the area of the six towns and the surrounding area of the northern part of Korea was a prerequisite for extending the armed struggle to the homeland. A firmly-structured semi-guerrilla zone would contribute to the elimination of various Leftist practices in the development of the guerrilla zones.

We had formed a detachment consisting of 40 men from the 2nd company of the Wangqing battalion, who had been operating

from their base at Sancidao, and ten commanding officers and political workers who had been selected from the companies, a detachment to be sent to the homeland. We then sent an advance party of several men under the command of platoon leader Pak Thae Hwa to the Onsong area.

Certain people, who were influential in the east Manchuria party organization at the time were very displeased with our plan of operations in the homeland, and obstructed its implementation in every possible way. They warned us that the Korean communists in China were demonstrating a nationalist tendency to "extend the revolution to Korea" by fighting for the Korean revolution, and that we should abandon the idea of operations in the homeland because it was contrary to the principle of one party in one country.

I rejected their objection and continued to prepare for the operations, being convinced that loyalty to my national duty meant loyalty to my internationalist duty, and that the Korean revolutionaries had an inviolable right to fight for the liberation of Korea.

At about this time, I was incensed by an incident that cast a shadow over the anti-Japanese guerrillas' advance to the homeland. A man from the 2nd company who had been to Onsong of the homeland on a liaison mission was arrested on his return by a man named Kim Song Do and taken to the east Manchuria ad hoc committee.

The 2nd company commander An Ki Ho and its political

instructor Choe Chun Guk hurried to see me at Macun and complained furiously of Kim Song Do's abuse of power, denouncing the arrest of this man without his commanders' knowledge.

Choe Chun Guk, who used to be as gentle as a newly-wed bride and so well-mannered that he seldom spoke ill of anybody, even went so far in his abuse of Kim Song Do as to call him by his nickname "one-eyed Wang." I simply listened in silence, for I was not acquainted with Kim Song Do. All that I knew of him was that he had been the head of the propaganda department of the east Manchuria ad hoc committee of the Young Communist League, had recently been appointed to the east Manchuria party ad hoc committee, and was now inspecting different counties in east Manchuria. In the east Manchuria party organizations, those cadres from higher structures who travelled around and gave guidance to their subordinate organizations were called inspectors.

I rebuked Choe Chun Guk sternly for his indecent manner of speech.

"Comrade Chun Guk, when did you get into the bad habit of calling people by indecent nicknames? True, Kim Song Do has ignored us and gone too far, but can't you have the magnanimity to respect his person?"

Choe Chun Guk was very tolerant of criticism.

"I am sorry," he apologized with a serious expression. "Forgive me if I was indecent or rude."

"The guerrilla zone is a place where people live close together,

so people may well have nicknames. But ‘one-eyed’ is too rude a nickname.”

At that moment, I was more offended by the Wangqing people who called Kim Song Do “one-eyed Wang” than by his arrest of the 2nd company man.

I asked why Kim was called Wang. Choe Chun Guk answered that the inhabitants of Jiandao had probably nicknamed him Wang because Kim Song Do, a Korean, smelt like a Chinese and grovelled too much to his superiors.

On my way to the east Manchuria ad hoc committee, I dropped in at the county party committee and discovered that there, too, Kim Song Do was known by the name of “one-eyed Wang.”

From Ri Yong Guk in the office of the county party committee, I learned that Kim Song Do was a veteran party member who was admitted to the Korean Communist Party as early as 1927, and worked as a member of a party cell committee under the Manchurian general bureau of the Tuesday group before being arrested by the Japanese consulate police and imprisoned and beaten. After his release from prison, he quickly transferred to the Chinese party and was promoted to a post at ad hoc committee level. He wore dark glasses, probably in order to disguise his ruined eye, and went about in *dabushanzi*.

Ri Yong Guk described Kim Song Do as a “man not only eloquent but also tactful enough to slip socks onto the feet of a flying crow.”

I had interviewed Kim Song Do for about three hours in the

office of the east Manchuria ad hoc committee.

As I sat face to face with him, my intention of accusing him of an abuse of power gave way to a feeling of pity for him. The eye that had withered away and his darkish complexion gave him an exhausted look that aroused pity in me. How praiseworthy and moving it was that despite the physical handicap of the loss of one eye, this man was trekking across steep mountains in Jiandao in the service of the revolutionary cause!

"Comrade Inspector," I addressed him, trying to be courteous and refraining from raising my voice. "Why did you arrest the man at his workplace, without so much as discussing his case with us?"

Kim Song Do gazed at me over his glasses. His look seemed to express displeasure with me and question how I dared to ask such an insolent question of an inspector of the ad hoc committee.

"It is strange that you should ask me such a question. You know quite well that this man's act in crossing the border is an expression of nationalism, which contradicts proletarian internationalism.... We consider him to be a member of the 'Minsaengdan.' "

"On what grounds?"

"His journey to and from Korea is an expression of nationalism, and this nationalistic error has made him a member of the 'Minsaengdan.' Can he be anything else?"

"Is this your own view?"

"Yes. And my superior's also."

After this answer, I was tongue-tied for a short while, because I

felt more pity than repugnance for him.

It was strange that I should feel a certain sympathy for him, not contempt, at that moment. I should have been angered by the tomfool and shattered his nonsense with cogent argument. His totally absurd prejudice and childish way of thinking, so much out of keeping with this illustrious position of inspector on the east Manchuria ad hoc committee, must have aroused this sense of pity for him in me.

"How miserable that he should be mentally crippled in addition to his physical handicap!" I thought to myself. "Of course, the stamina with which he devotes himself to the revolution, even wearing dark glasses to conceal his withered eye that could be noticed by secret agents is laudable. How good it would be if this mettle were reinforced with a sound intellect! How can a man suffer from such miserable mental disorder?"

"You seem to be identifying nationalism with the 'Minsaengdan,' " I said in a quieter tone of voice. "How can you dare to weigh them on the same balance? Is it not too fallacious a syllogism to tar the two with the same brush because a few nationalists like Pak Sok Yun, Jo Pyong Sang and Jon Song Ho have suggested the formation of the 'Minsaengdan'? As far as I know, you, too, first belonged to an organization which was under nationalist leadership, and then later you joined the communist movement. Would you accept it if for this reason you were labelled a 'Minsaengdan' member? Answer me."

"How could I...." he mumbled.

I gave him a few minutes to reflect, and then resumed my forceful argument, “I presume you had Tong Chang-rong in mind when you mentioned a superior of yours. But I don’t think he is such a narrow-minded man. If Secretary Tong Chang-rong had made such a decision out of minor prejudice or misunderstanding, without being fully informed of the actual state of affairs, you comrades, who are familiar with the Korean situation, should have advised him in every possible way so that he had a correct understanding, shouldn’t you?”

Kim Song Do was silent.

On my way back to my headquarters, taking with me the arrested comrade, I could still hardly rid myself of a feeling of pity for him.

To be candid, I always felt sympathy for him through all the many conflicts we had during debates on theoretical matters, until he directed the purge of revolutionaries, dancing to the tune of others.

But I ceased to sympathize with him then, when I saw him murdering many staunch revolutionaries under the pretext of purging the “Minsaengdan.” Later, he himself was executed on a charge of being a “Minsaengdan” member. My experience over decades of turbulent events showed me that terrorists fell at the hands of terrorists, that Leftists were tried and executed by Leftists, and that self-destruction was the fate in store for those who lacked the guts to stick with their own conviction and tried to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

The detachment to the homeland that had left Macun early in March, arrived on this side of the Tuman River opposite Thamakgol, Onsong County. It billeted itself on the village of Solgol and during the week while it awaited the arrival of the advance party that had infiltrated the Onsong area, it set about the work of revolutionizing the village and its surrounding area to build a semi-guerrilla zone. During daylight, we had combat training at the western foot of Mt. Songdong and at night we visited the villagers, establishing underground organizations among them.

At that time, we also worked among the chiefs of ten households and a hundred households, who were at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy of the puppet state of Manchukuo. Because we respected the interests of the people and established our relations with the local inhabitants in accordance with the code of conduct of the revolutionary army, we left an excellent impression on the people. While staying at the village of Solgol the guerrillas gave the peasants a helping hand with many jobs. Some of us brought bush clover down from the mountain and even mended the fences of the villagers with whom we were billeted.

The story of an axe, well-known from the reminiscences of Pak Yong Sun, occurred during our stay in the village.

One day, with a view to helping my Chinese host, I took an axe and a water pail to the Tuman River. In winter the villagers used to fetch drinking water from the river. The water was drawn from a hole made by breaking the ice with an axe or a pickaxe.

When I had nearly finished breaking a hole in the ice, the sharp head of the tool slipped from the handle and fell into the hole. I raked about for hours with a long pole with hooked prongs on its end, but it was in vain.

I offered a generous price to the master of the house, apologizing to him sincerely for my carelessness. The old man would not accept the money, saying that, although he was too old to help the revolutionary army, he was grateful to me for my helping hand every morning. I insisted on his taking the money, saying that if I were to leave the place without making good his loss, I, the commander, would be violating the discipline of the revolutionary army.

Although I had paid generously for the axe, I was still haunted by the thought of it. No amount of money would be able to make up for the old man's loss of his cherished tool. In the spring of 1959, I asked a group of visitors to old battlefields of the anti-Japanese armed struggle in northeast China to apologize once again for me to the old man in the village of Liangshuiquanzi.

To our regret, however, when the group arrived at the village, the old man was no longer in this world.

We crossed the Tuman River, and then, guided by the advance party, climbed Mt. Wangjae at about four or five o'clock one afternoon.

The heads of the revolutionary organizations in the region of the six towns and the political workers, who had been in hiding among the larches on the ridge, came out to meet us.

On the summit of the mountain, which was densely covered with young oak trees, I surveyed the scenery for a long time. There is a saying that a decade changes the world, but this part of the country had been changed in less than three years. The slag heaps from a coal-mine were a new sight that had not existed when we were forming the homeland party organization on Turu Hill, and so was the train that was running along the Onsong-Unggi (Sonbong) line, one small piece of the new Onsong, which had not been there in the autumn of 1930 or in the spring of 1931.

Along with the mountains and the rivers, the people and the revolution had grown and advanced. Since we were here last, new anti-Japanese revolutionary organizations had been created one after another and begun their activity.

The fighters in the six towns and surrounding areas had been enveloping the enemy's administrative machine in an immense steely network of revolutionary organizations in the northern frontier zone of Korea, where the heads of the Japanese military and police structures in charge of keeping the peace boasted of perfect security on the border.

Our armed struggle, too, had grown. The guerrilla forces in east Manchuria, for instance, had developed into battalions. The battalions in different counties were to develop into regiments and then into divisions before very long. The armed guerrilla forces of the Korean communists were active in south and north Manchuria as well. The day when our divisions and corps would advance in force into the homeland and destroy the enemy was not too far

away. We, their advance party, were already on the soil of Onsong.

As I stood, lost in these thoughts, I recalled a piece of poetry composed in Chinese characters by General Nam I, which I had learnt at Changdok School from my maternal grandfather. I chanted it in a calm voice:

Grinding my sword wears down Mt. Paektu's rock:
My horse gulps and dries the Tuman River.
Should a man at twenty fail to subdue the land,
Who will in later years call him a man of calibre?

My grandfather had explained to me that General Nam distinguished himself in the battle against invaders from the north and was promoted to the post of minister of the army at the age of twenty. My grandfather encouraged me to become a general or a commander of the vanguard when I was grown up, and to fight the Japanese invaders. Hearing that General Nam was executed on the basis of a false accusation against him by a treacherous subject, I had lamented his death. I resolved to grow up to stand in the van of the war, repulse invaders and fight for the security of my country and my fellow people just as General Nam had done.

On the summit of Mt. Wangjae I pledged to myself: "As General Nam repelled the invaders from the north by fighting on the strong basis of the six forts on the northeastern frontier, so we will spread the armed struggle deep into the homeland by drawing on the support of the semi-guerrilla zone created around the six

towns, and will trap the Japanese imperialists and destroy them!"

The political workers and heads of revolutionary organizations who assembled on the mountain reported to me the situation in the homeland and the activities they had conducted.

I spoke words of encouragement to them, telling them that the work of laying the mass foundations for the anti-Japanese revolution was proceeding without a hitch in the northern frontier. I also set them the task of developing the armed struggle and extending it into the homeland.

In this question, I laid special emphasis on the task of establishing the semi-guerrilla zone. We intended to establish semi-guerrilla zones in the Onsong area and many other regions of the homeland, secret rendezvous points and other bases for our activities in the dense forests, and thus lay the cornerstone of the armed struggle in the homeland.

The meeting on Mt. Wangjae discussed the task of rallying the whole nation as a single political force under the banner of an anti-Japanese national united front on the basis of a worker-peasant alliance, as well as the task of the revolutionary organizations in the homeland in speeding up the development of the mass movement and the preparations for founding the party.

The guerrillas' advance to the Onsong area was a prelude to the spreading of the anti-Japanese armed struggle to the homeland, and it marked a new milestone in the development of the national liberation struggle. It demonstrated at home and abroad our unshakable conviction in the view that the Korean communists had

an inalienable and inviolable right to fight for the Korean revolution.

The advance of the anti-Japanese guerrillas to the Onsong area and the meeting on Mt. Wangjae proved the correctness of our policy of establishing semi-guerrilla zones around full-scale guerrilla zones and in the homeland, and that the subjective and objective conditions for the establishment of semi-guerrilla zones in Jiandao and in the area of the six towns on the northern frontier of Korea were mature.

After this meeting, we visited Ryuda Islet and Paksokgol in Kyongwon (Saeppyol), and Kumsan Hill at Sinhung village in Jongsong County and many other places in the homeland, where we held meetings, gave short courses and conducted political work, mainly for the purpose of teaching the political workers and heads of revolutionary organizations in the homeland the principles and methods of the underground revolutionary struggle.

In the homeland we frequently met with revolutionaries in order to instil in them the Juche-orientated revolutionary line and working methods, and help them to guide the complex practical struggle with due care. The proper political and practical training of the leaders of the revolutionary organizations and their hardcore elements in the homeland was a prerequisite for success in the creation of the semi-guerrilla zones.

The elites who had been sent on the mission of guiding the revolutionary struggle in the homeland became active within the very fabric of the country, in trade unions and peasants'

associations, which were concentrating their efforts on the resistance against the Japanese, and they formed revolutionary mass organizations in many parts of the country. These political workers extended the network of their activity to Seoul and other parts of southern Korea.

The party organizations formed in the area on the Tuman River played a decisive role in establishing durable semi-guerrilla zones around the six towns and in pushing forward the revolutionary movement in the homeland.

Following this, the cadres in east Manchuria adopted our policy on the establishment of semi-guerrilla zones, and set out to implement this policy themselves. Some people denied the correctness of our proposal and called it a Rightist deviation, but they were refuted on the spot.

From the spring of 1933, strenuous efforts were made to establish semi-guerrilla zones in the Soviet districts of east Manchuria. Semi-guerrilla zones were established in wide areas–in Luozigou, Dahuangwai, Zhuanjiaolou and Liangshuiquanzi in Wangqing County, in Yanji, Hunchun, Antu and Helong. They made a great contribution to the development of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. Some full-scale guerrilla zones which were unsuitable for defence were reorganized into semi-guerrilla zones.

Many of the village heads who had been appointed by the puppet state of Manchukuo sympathized with us and supported us. The area surrounding Luozigou, for instance, was completely under our control, and nearly all of its inhabitants took our side.

The experience of the development of semi-guerrilla zones proved valuable for the activities of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in the Mt. Paektu area in the subsequent years, and the validity of the policy was fully demonstrated through these activities.

The semi-guerrilla zone had proved very effective, so when we established our bases in the Mt. Paektu area on the Amnok River in the latter half of the 1930s, we built secret camps only in the places where the revolutionary army units were stationed, and established semi-guerrilla zones elsewhere. We formed revolutionary organizations among the masses, without defining them as either "Red" or "White," and we sent political workers to them. We did not remain in one spot, but moved from place to place, so as to prevent the enemy from discovering the base of our operations. The semi-guerrilla zones produced many patriots such as Jong Tong Chol, Ri Hun, Ri Ju Ik (Ri Chwi) and many others from among the district heads, the heads of a hundred households or ten households, sub-county chiefs, policemen and self-defence corps men. In those days we planted clever men as our operatives in the lowest administrative organs of the enemy. We also won over many other junior officials, so that they supported the revolution. During daylight, they pretended to work enthusiastically for Manchukuo; at night, they helped us, guiding the revolutionary army on the march, meeting operatives from the revolutionary army to hand over information they had collected during the day, and collecting goods to be sent to support the

revolutionary army. The semi-guerrilla zones established in east Manchuria and Korea became reliable satellites which protected the army and the people in the liberated areas and the people’s government established there, as well as the achievements of the struggle for democracy.

Drawing on the support of the full-scale guerrilla zones and the semi-guerrilla zones which had been established in the vast area surrounding the former, the anti-Japanese guerrillas penetrated deep into the enemy-ruled area, revolutionized the masses, and expanded the mass organizations as well as the vanguard organizations of the party and Young Communist League. They were thus able to strengthen the mass foundations of the anti-Japanese armed struggle and switch from the defensive to the offensive. As we went over to the offensive in the war against the Japanese, we were able to break the enemy’s tight economic blockade and find easier solutions to the problem of food, the greatest headache in the life of the guerrilla zone.

The semi-guerrilla zones enabled us to overcome the Leftist deviation that had discriminated between “Red” and “White” territories and driven a large number of people over to the enemy side, and also to rally broad sections of the population into a single political force under the banner of the anti-Japanese national united front. They also contributed greatly to the elimination of flunkeyism and dogmatism, and the establishment of the principle of Juche in the development of the Korean revolution.

Luozigou and Liangshuiquanzi were the most exemplary of all

the semi-guerrilla zones in the Wangqing area.

Ri Kwang rendered distinguished service in transforming Luozigou into a semi-guerrilla zone. When he was dispatched there, he built up strong footholds for us by working among the soldiers of the anti-Japanese army of Chinese nationalists as well as among people from the Independence Army.

Luozigou had been made a major base of the independence movement led by Ri Tong Hwi and his group since the beginning of the 1920s. The old people who had joined him in the Independence Army movement had great influence in the area. Under the auspices of these people, Ri Kwang was able to educate and organize the inhabitants on revolutionary lines.

Many able political workers were sent to Luozigou to help transform it into a semi-guerrilla zone. Some of them laid down their lives. Choe Jong Hwa, who contributed greatly to the work of revolutionizing Luozigou, was one who died there.

Pak Kil Song, an able detachment commander of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, and Choe Kwang were working underground at Luozigou in those days.

The enemy formed reactionary organizations such as the concord society or cooperative society in that area and made frantic efforts to stamp out the revolutionary forces, whereas we formed large mass organizations like the Anti-Japanese Association and united all the patriots. Luozigou also served as food-supply base for the revolutionary masses of people in Wangqing. Whenever there was a food crisis in the Xiaowangqing

guerrilla zone, messengers were sent to a revolutionary organization in Luozigou to fetch emergency supplies. The members of the revolutionary organization in Luozigou would carry loads of cereal on their backs as far as Shimen at Shiliping and deliver them to the people from Wangqing. Even after Luozigou was occupied by the enemy, food was still carried from there to liberated areas. It would be no exaggeration to say that, from the latter half of 1935, when the guerrilla zone was disbanded and the main force of the KPRA left on its expedition to north Manchuria, the revolutionaries in Wangqing County survived by eating food from Luozigou. Some of the revolutionary masses who took refuge from the enemy's "punitive" operations on the hill to the west of Luozigou also ate the food from Luozigou during the autumn and winter of 1935 as did the soldiers of the 3rd company of Wangqing.

Luozigou became such an excellent source of food supplies for the revolutionaries in Wangqing partly because the place was a natural granary surrounded by fertile land, where even passing beggars were welcomed to share meals of millet, but more especially because many revolutionary organizations had taken root there and given the inhabitants a good education.

Kim Ryong Un, a head of a hundred households in Luozigou, a grassroots civil-servant who enjoyed the confidence of the Manchukuo authorities, was a member of our organization. He took advantage of his official position in order to help us revolutionaries a great deal.

In order to prevent the guerrilla operatives from infiltrating into the walled town and the people from maintaining secret contact with the revolutionary army, the enemy strictly controlled the flow of people going in and out of the town by posting young men on guard at all times, while at the same time taking stringent measures against the smuggling of food and consumer goods out of the town. The guards were each equipped with a club, which served as a sort of credential issued by the puppet state of Manchukuo.

When soldiers of the revolutionary army went to Luozigou to obtain food, Kim Ryong Un used to select only young men under our influence for guard duty. When the soldiers who had come for food reached the town, the guards would hand over their clubs to them, then run back to the head of a hundred households. Under his direction they collected food and delivered it to the provisions detail.

Members of revolutionary organizations in Luozigou would coax soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army into selling their ammunition to them. One shop in the town was run by a veteran of the Young Communist League. In order to obtain goods to assist the revolutionary army, he swore an oath of brotherhood with soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army.

One puppet army soldier, who desperately loved money, would buy things at low prices in various places and then ask the shopkeeper to sell them for him at a high price. The soldier did this because, if he were discovered selling things himself, he would be punished. He swore brotherhood with the shopkeeper and even

sold him ammunition. The shopkeeper bought it at 25 *fen* a piece and sent it on to the revolutionary army. As many as five thousand cartridges were obtained in this way.

This is merely one simple instance proving the validity and effectiveness of the semi-guerrilla zone.

The semi-guerrilla zone established around the village of Liangshuiquanzi in the southern tip of the Wangqing area gave a great support to the revolutionary army. The revolutionary organizations in that village sent food and goods to the liberated area on dozens of occasions.

In those years, we obtained much of our cereals, clothing, matches, drugs, explosives, salt and other essentials required for the guerrilla zone from the revolutionary organizations in Onsong and Liangshuiquanzi.

Salt was the scarcest commodity in the guerrilla zone. Things were so hard that we had to satisfy our craving for salt by putting a tiny grain of it into our mouths after eating every five spoonfuls of gruel. In order to make life impossible in the guerrilla zone, the enemy used every conceivable means to stop food and salt finding its way there. In autumn, the peasants were forced to bring all their harvests into the stores of the concentration villages under the enemy's control, and then receive daily rations based on the number of mouths in each household. The enemy knew that any surplus food would find its way across into the guerrilla zone.

The enemy even went so far as to form anti-contraband squads, the salt police, and have them make surprise searches of the

peasants' houses. Any surplus of soy sauce and bean paste was taxed, and the owners of the surplus were whipped with triangular wooden sticks.

In the autumn of 1934, we sent a large group of people, including 30 men from the 2nd company with horses, and even some children, to Liangshuiquanzi to obtain salt.

It was 50 miles to the village and back from Wangqing.

Notified in advance of the salt operation, the revolutionary organization of the village made piles of salt near the bank of the Tuman River with the salt that they had obtained from the underground revolutionary organizations in Onsong and the Namyang shipping agency. They met the salt convoy near the river.

The convoy loaded two to three sacks of salt on each of the horses and carried them to Sancidao safely. The remainder was transported to the guerrilla base, 20 to 30 kilograms on each man's back. Some of the salt was exchanged for flour at Luozigou.

Most of the supplies which the organization of Liangshuiquanzi sent to us came from the six towns including Onsong on the northern frontier of the homeland. The people there also obtained many of the goods they sent to the guerrilla base from Tumen and Longjing, because it was impossible to procure large amounts of consumer goods in the homeland, which was under the enemy's strict surveillance and control. People in the organizations in the homeland would cross the river in secret and travel to commercial centres like Tumen and Longjing to buy essentials which were

later sent to anti-Japanese guerrilla bases through the appropriate channels.

Tumen and Longjing were in effect our reliable sources of supplies. For this reason, we seldom attacked such places as Tumen, Longjing and Baicaogou, where many of our revolutionary organizations were working underground. Once in the early days of our guerrilla war, our comrades attacked Baicaogou. Immediately after the raid, Ri Kwang's father informed us of the adverse effect the battle had on the rich people whom he had intended to draw into the united front. He said they had been frightened by the attack. From then on, we refrained from attacking such places. The semi-guerrilla zones in the six towns rendered historical and highly meritorious services to the survival of the soldiers and civilians in Wangqing and other liberated areas.

We established a large number of concealed bases of activity in the enemy-ruled areas, in addition to the full-scale guerrilla zones and semi-guerrilla zones. These bases supported the military actions and political activities of the guerrillas as well as providing liaison links. The combination of underground revolutionary organizations and liaison points provided a type of temporary and mobile base, which was established in many large cities such as Longjing, Hunchun, Tumen, Laotougou, and Baicaogou and along the railways in the enemy area.

Whenever I recall the unforgettable days when the semi-guerrilla zones were being established in Jiandao and in the homeland, I remember O Jung Hwa, a man who made a most

powerful impression on me.

On his release from the Sodaemun prison in Seoul, O Jung Hwa took a train bound for the north, stopped at his wife's family home in the vicinity of Huimudong for a few days to recuperate, and then immediately returned to Shixian and came to see me.

His release and his reappearance in Wangqing were a great joy and consolation to me at the time when I had just arrived in the guerrilla zone from my expeditions to south and north Manchuria.

The first thing he asked for in the interview with me was a major assignment. Judging from his unhealthy complexion, I thought he needed a few months of convalescence, but since he insisted on having something to do, I told him to establish a semi-guerrilla zone in some part of the area around Gayahe.

District No. 5, in which he worked was adjacent to Liangshuiquanzi, Tumen, Yanji, Baicaogou, Daduchuan and other major bases of the enemy's "punitive" forces, and in Gayahe there was a substation of the Japanese consulate police. Liucaigou was raided by the enemy early in January 1933, and later Sishuiping was attacked twice by the "punitive" forces.

Though he had been released from prison, O Jung Hwa himself was being shadowed by an enemy agent. But he could not conceal his joy at the assignment he had received.

I gave him the assignment of establishing a semi-guerrilla zone near Gayahe because the area was so close to the enemy's bases and also because the area was a frequent target of enemy attack. The assignment was difficult and dangerous, but I had

every confidence in O Jung Hwa.

He had already made a strong impression upon me when I first met him in the autumn of 1930, an impression that gave me confidence in him. At that time I had a serious talk with him in his own house. When I came out after the conversation, I found several sturdy young men standing alertly on watch outside the fence. Similar young men were also on guard at the entrance to the village. These arrangements demonstrated his working ability and his revolutionary attitude to me in a very powerful way.

His revolutionary prowess found brilliant expression in rallying the masses to action.

As the first step towards giving the village a revolutionary training, he obtained a pair of hair-clippers and formed a scissors association which enlisted all the villagers. In those days, ordinary barbers' shops charged 15 *fen* for a haircut but O Jung Hwa charged only five *fen*. He bought books with the money he earned in this manner, and taught the members of the association how to read and write. Interested in being able to read as well as in a cheap haircut, people participated in the work of the association with great enthusiasm. In this way O Jung Hwa educated the villagers.

After providing them with the basics of enlightenment he formed the Lingdong Friendship Association by merging the old boys' association, schoolmates' association and friendship association. The new friendship association was a legal organization of young people and students in Dunhua and Yanji,

Hunchun, Helong and Wangqing–the localities situated to the east of Haerbaling.

O Jung Hwa frequently prepared and produced dramatic performances in order to give the villagers a revolutionary training. When he wrote a script himself, his cousins, of whom there were very many, would divide the parts among themselves, make the scenery, direct their own performances and stage a perfect show.

After inspiring the people with revolutionary enthusiasm in this manner, O Jung Hwa first accepted his own family and relations into the revolutionary organization, and then enlisted all the villagers. Both before and after the winter meeting at Mingyuegou, he and Kang Sang Jun, Jo Chang Dok and Yu Se Ryong helped with the procurement of weapons, a fundamental task in the preparations for the formation of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. The weapons they had captured from the enemy at the risk of their lives were a significant contribution to the equipment of the special detachment whose members included Choe In Jun, Han Hung Gwon, Kang Sang Jun and Kim Un Sik. Just as we intended, O Jung Hwa established an excellent semi-guerrilla zone in part of district No. 5, the district which was first in the line of the enemy's attack. He also carried out in good faith the task of establishing bases for activity in the enemy-held area. The Chonil Printing Works in Tumen, which he transformed into a major base for our activity, became the eyes and ears of the revolutionary army.

The enemy regarded O Jung Hwa and his family as a thorn in

his side, and was watching for a chance to eliminate them. In the spring of 1933, a small guerrilla army group captured a secret letter from the Japanese consulate in Longjing to their police station in Shixian. It contained a directive ordering the killing of the Os.

As soon as we learned of the secret instructions, we sent guerrillas to save the family. The guerrillas swiftly evacuated all 31 of the Os to Shiliping.

In the summer of 1933, O Jung Hwa, who had fought undauntedly and tirelessly every minute of all his life, always racing about at the speed of a short-distance runner, was unfortunately arrested by the enemy at a secret rendezvous in Beifengwudong. He was murdered on the spot immediately he was captured. We have no way of knowing what his last moments were like or how he faced his death. The enemy agents who murdered him and his comrades disappeared, leaving their vile deed as an eternally unsolvable mystery.

When old man O Thae Hui came rushing to the scene of the murder in furious haste from Shiliping, his son was lying, bloody and battered, his eyes open, near the rendezvous. The eyeballs, in which the spark of life still lingered, reflected the blue sky of the guerrilla zone on which he used to gaze with such fondness when alive.

But the mouth was closed more tightly than in his life. From the sight of it the old man knew that his son had not betrayed the secret of the organization in order to save his life. The heroism of

this death only grieved the old man all the more. "You have lived a life of only 34 years, but it was an honourable life. A long life does not always mean happiness. But you have left me too soon! How heart-rending your death will be to General Kim Il Sung, who treasured you so much!" The old man thought as he held his dead son in his arms.

I could not believe that he was dead. How could it be that a man who had talked and walked so much, and achieved so much in his work, living like a blazing fire, should die so quietly?

No one was with him at the moment of his death. He was left lying there on the ground, leaving not a single word of behest. If he had had something to tell me what would it have been? He might well have asked me to give him another assignment, since the semi-guerrilla zone was already established.

If he had lived, I would have entrusted him with greater responsibility. According to the revolutionary ethics, entrusting a man with many assignments is an expression of the greatest love and the greatest possible confidence in him.

Our revolution had lost yet another distinguished organizer and propagandist, a man who was loved by everyone in Jiandao, another loyal and stalwart pillar and support, who had inspired the people with pride and struck terror into the heart of the enemy. It was a heart-rending blow struck just at the moment when our revolution was surging ahead in east Manchuria.

O Jung Hwa had awakened the revolutionary consciousness of the masses and roused them to action by sacrificing himself.

Though he was gone, new heroes sprang up like bamboo shoots after the rain in the soil of the semi-guerrilla zones where his blood had been spilt, heroes who would carry the great war against the Japanese imperialists to ever greater heights.

3. The Choice between the Soviet and the People's Revolutionary Government

Leftist abuses were most rampant in the establishment of structures of political power, and Leftist deviation in the building of political power found its most glaring expression in the line of building the Soviet and in some of its policies, which were the products of the petty bourgeois rashness of people steeped in dogmatism, sycophancy and adventurism.

Political power had been a major subject of discussion among us from the days of the Down-with-Imperialism Union, a subject which nobody had ever ignored. Some people contended that the question of power was a question for the future, which could be taken up by the young people of Korea after the country became independent, the question of a concept of government the construction of which could wait until the sovereignty of the state was restored. We were not in agreement with this view, maintaining that views on the correct form of government directly affected the nature of the revolution which was to be carried out.

While we were in Jilin political power was the subject of extremely heated argument. There was hardly a political forum in Jilin that did not discuss the type of state to be established after the country became independent. While the leaders of the Independence Army who were affiliated with the three nationalist organizations vehemently supported royalist government or bourgeois republicanism, politicians who had belonged to the old Korean Communist Party such as Kim Chan, An Kwang Chon and Sin Il Yong advocated the immediate introduction of socialism and a proletarian dictatorship.

Pak So Sim adhered to the classic schema and argued over the question of a worker-peasant dictatorship. He supported the idea of the workers and peasants becoming the masters of state power, but he shook his head, saying that he did not like the word "dictatorship."

Differences in the degree of their political awareness and their interests led some of the young people in Jilin to express their support for royalist government, while some had a lingering interest in bourgeois republicanism and others applauded the Soviet Union's type of socialism.

Kim Hyok, Cha Kwang Su, Kye Yong Chun, Sin Yong Gun and other communists of the younger generation did not like the old men of the Independence Army who spoke out for the restoration of royalist government. They also had doubts about the proponents of immediate socialism.

This state of affairs obliged us to engage in heated polemics

about political power as a major question in the students and young people's forum, which dealt mainly with political affairs.

Later, at the meeting held in Kalun, we defined the nature of the Korean revolution as anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and democratic. On this basis, we emphasized that the Korean communists must establish a political system for the people in liberated Korea, a democratic government which would champion the interests of the broad working masses including the workers, peasants, working intellectuals, national capitalists and religious believers, and would reject royalist government or bourgeois parliamentarism.

We maintained essentially the same position when the question of power was discussed at the meeting held in Mingyuegou in December 1931.

With the establishment of guerrilla bases in the Jiandao area, the type of political power to be established became the subject of wide-scale discussion. In order to maintain and administer those guerrilla zones which were liberated areas, it was necessary to set up a government which would organize the economic activities of the people, educate them and develop culture in the area under its jurisdiction. Without establishing a government in the guerrilla zones, which were the embryo of a state, it would be impossible to provide the people with a livelihood and mobilize them in the struggle.

From the autumn of 1932, therefore, the communists in east Manchuria undertook the historic task of establishing the government in the guerrilla zones. On the occasion of the

anniversary of the October Revolution in the same year, a mass meeting was held in Gayahe, Wangqing County, and the establishment of a Soviet government was proclaimed. Almost simultaneously, Soviet power was established in Wangougou and Sandaowan in Yanji County. The establishment of the revolutionary government in the guerrilla zones must be regarded as a significant step towards realizing the people's cherished desire.

In its initial stage, I, too, was pleased at the establishment of Soviet power in the guerrilla zones. I considered that the name of the government was not important as long as the government championed the people's interests.

In those days "Soviet enthusiasm" was sweeping throughout east Manchuria. The establishment of Soviet power was recognized as a historical trend by revolutionaries and progressive people in all countries which aspired to socialism and communism. This hot wind swept through Europe and Asia. The establishment of the Chinese Soviet in Ruijin and of the Nghe Tinh Soviet in Vietnam are clear examples.

Even those who regarded the Korean revolution as a bourgeois democratic revolution spoke about a worker-peasant Soviet government.

The "Action Programme of the Communist Party of Korea" which had been drafted by Choe Song U, a Korean, and other people working at the Comintern headquarters, in cooperation with the officials in charge of the Oriental Department of the Executive

Committee of the Comintern (Kuusinen, Magyar and Okano), proposed the immediate task of "establishing a Soviet state of workers and peasants," along with the complete independence of Korea.

Unconditional support and acceptance of the Soviet line in revolutionary practice was a matter of common sense beyond dispute in the international communist movement and was regarded as a criterion for distinguishing between the stances of communist revolution and opportunism. The establishment of a Soviet government was regarded as the most important task by the communist parties and communist organizations in capitalist countries, to say nothing of the colonies and semi-colonial countries. In fact, Soviet power became the ideal of the entire world proletariat.

The Soviet idea was so very influential because it was recognized as the only type of government capable of putting an end to all manner of exploitation and oppression and building a welfare society that would regard the interests of the working masses as absolute.

A free and peaceful new world without exploitation and oppression was the age-long dream and ideal of humanity.

The newborn Soviet government in Russia had proved its unprecedented effectiveness in suppressing the insurrection of the overthrown exploiting class, defending the country from the invasion of allied imperialist forces, rehabilitating the economy, and pressing forward with the building of socialism. The

triumphant advance of Soviet socialism aroused an admiration among the people which was little short of belief in an illusion.

It was by no means unreasonable for mankind to regard the Soviet Union as a beacon-light and accept the Soviet as the best and most advanced of all forms of government. It was natural that the people of Jiandao, which was adjacent to the Soviet Union and subject to its influence in many ways, should be swayed by illusions about Soviet power.

On my return to Wangqing from the campaigns in south and north Manchuria, I was dumbfounded at the complaints against the Soviet policy that could be heard in all parts of the guerrilla zone.

These complaints indicated serious problems that we could not overlook.

I saw instantly that the rumours spread by disgruntled people contained some truth.

As I travelled around the guerrilla zone, I learned about the people's attitude towards Soviet power in greater detail. My constant contacts and candid conversations with hundreds of people gave me a full picture of the consequences of Leftist Soviet policy.

The inhabitants of the guerrilla zone began to be disillusioned by Soviet power from the time when the government, following the slogan of the immediate introduction of socialism, proclaimed the abolition of private property, and brought all personal property and real estate under communal ownership. Everything was communalized, from land and provisions to the farming tools and

implements such as sickles, hoes and pitchforks that had belonged to individual peasants. After this sweeping introduction of communal ownership, the Soviet government subjected all the inhabitants of the guerrilla zone–men and women, young and old–to the new order of communal life, communal labour and communal distribution. This was the life of the *artel* proclaimed by the Soviet radicals.

This policy amounted to sending kindergarten children to university without giving them primary and secondary education. The Soviet government also expropriated, without compensation, all the rich farmers and landowners, regardless of whether they were large landowners, small landowners, pro-Japanese landowners or anti-Japanese landowners, and even confiscated their cattle, horses and provisions.

Those landowners who remained in the guerrilla zone even after the land of east Manchuria had been divided into "Red territory" and "White territory," were in general patriotic and strongly opposed to the Japanese. They gave enthusiastic support to the guerrilla army when the communists were raising an army in Wangqing.

One of those progressive landowners was a Chinese named Zhang Shi-ming. At the time of its large-scale "punitive" invasion, in the spring of 1932, the Japanese Jiandao task force even burnt down his grain store. Even though the "punitive" forces ordered a forced evacuation at bayonet-point, Zhang Shi-ming remained in the guerrilla zone, instead of moving to Daduchuan. His previous

grievances against the Japanese were augmented that spring. Landowner though he was, he had given unstinting material and moral support to the people in the guerrilla zone.

"Officers and men from the guerrilla army," he would say to the guerrillas who came to him for contributions. "I am remaining here in this valley because I hate to see the Japanese. Please at least drive them away from Daduchuan!"

The people in the guerrilla zone were on good terms with him.

But the Soviet government drove even this landowner away to the enemy-ruled area. He pleaded with the Soviet government for permission to live in the guerrilla zone, but the Soviet rejected his request.

"The Soviet government has decided to expropriate the property of all landowners," the Soviet informed him. "It is true that your anti-Japanese spirit is strong and you have given generous support to the work of the guerrilla zone, but you are a member of the exploiting class, and we are obliged to eliminate you. Leave this place quickly."

All the property of this landowner who had given wholehearted support to the revolution was confiscated there and then and put into a storehouse which was at the disposal of the Soviet government. The beggared landowner left in tears to go to Daduchuan, where the Japanese forces were stationed.

Those who obeyed the order to carry out a purge at that time even took the children's flower-patterned shoes from the chests at landowners' houses. The Chinese people had an interesting custom

according to which, when a female baby was born to them, they prepared the shoes for the children the female baby would have when she grew and married. Such shoes were called "flower-patterned shoes." They used to make shoes of various sizes for babies younger than one year, for one-year olds, two-year olds and so on upwards, and then store them in chests. The chests contained some shoes as small as thimbles.

Having meekly allowed even these shoes to be taken away, what thoughts would these landlords carry with them as they left the guerrilla zone?

The valley of Xiaowangqing was crowded with cattle and horses that had been confiscated from propertied people. There were more than enough of them to stock a sizable farm, and every young person in the guerrilla zone went about on horseback. It was what one might call a fashion under Soviet rule.

The Leftist elements even regarded Chinese women's customs of wearing earrings and wrapping their feet tight to check their growth as evils to be combatted.

During the first half of the 1930s, Leftist abuses were rampant in east Manchuria, and this Leftist tyranny subjected the sacred revolutionary principles to a severe test. How did this Leftist wind come to sweep the whole of east Manchuria? Were all the revolutionaries in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao hooligans or lunatics?

No. The overwhelming majority of the communists who were administering the guerrilla zone were good people with noble

revolutionary ideals and warm hearts.

They loved people and nourished the aspiration to justice more warmly than others. How was it, then, that these sympathetic and discreet people committed the irretrievable error of advocating and implementing this Leftist policy?

We identified the cause in the policy itself and in the ideological immaturity of the people who had determined the line. These absurdities in revolutionary practice were produced by the unrealistic directives issued by people at the top of the hierarchy who, in ignorance of specific circumstances, aped the ill-digested principles of the classics and lessons of earlier experience.

In those years, the blind rejection of people, indiscriminate elimination, overthrow and ostracism were considered to be in keeping with a thoroughgoing class approach, the qualities of the most advanced revolutionaries.

The instance of a widow who lent at a small rate of interest the money she had earned by weaving cloth by hand was labelled as a usurer, so that her promissory note was thrown into fire and even her capital confiscated by some peasants in Wangqing, shows what a sacred cow this Leftist practice had become. Unless they were misled by some of their leaders, the simple peasants could not have resorted to such absurdities.

Once I was surprised to hear how a company commander, Ri Ung Man, had joined the guerrilla army in Wangqing.

In the early days of recruiting, only people from the working class, poor peasantry and hired farm hands were admitted to the

armed ranks. Ri Ung Man's father had owned a little more than three hectares of sterile hillside land, so he had not been considered a poor peasant. He had applied to join the ranks more than once, but his earnest requests had been turned down because he came from an undesirable family. He had been told that a man with more than three hectares was a middle peasant.

After many days of mental torture, he had sold his father's land without his parents' knowledge, bought a box of Browning pistols, and taken it to the armed group, begging to be admitted. Only then had he been accepted. He was glad that he had become a guerrilla, but his family was at a loss, left without any means of livelihood.

My resolve to combat Leftist evils grew still firmer after I moved to Jiandao. I have been combatting them all my life ever since. My experience in those days has been of great help in my postliberation struggle to counter Leftist evils and eliminate bureaucratic tendencies.

Under the cloak of slick revolutionary phrases and ultra-party slogans, the Leftists continually mock the masses, abuse and deceive them, in pursuit of their own glory and advancement. From these selfish motives, they depict themselves as tanks or armoured vehicles advancing in the forefront of struggle. Thus counterrevolutionaries make use of the cloak of Leftism. So all communists must always be highly vigilant and not allow the Leftists to get a foothold in their camp.

The Leftist Soviet policy plunged the guerrilla bases into a state of vacillation and confusion which was difficult to rectify. A large

number of families, disillusioned and discontented with the Soviet policy, departed for enemy-ruled territory.

One night, on our way to Sancidao where Choe Chun Guk, the political instructor of the 2nd company, was working, my men and I met a middle-aged man and his family who were fleeing from the guerrilla zone. The man was leaving by night for fear of being labelled a counterrevolutionary if he was caught travelling in daylight. The five members of his family were carrying a few bundles or almost empty-handed. The three children were helped by their parents as they hobbled along.

The man, who looked about 50, trembled at the sight of our armed group. He seemed struck with dismay at having been discovered by a guerrilla commander.

"Have you done anything wrong?" I asked in a gentle voice, drawing the three shivering children to me one by one.

"No, nothing."

"Why, then, are you leaving the guerrilla zone?"

"It is too hard to live here...."

"Where are you going, then? Things will be even worse in the enemy area, won't they?"

"We have been living here because we couldn't endure the Japanese atrocities, so why should we go back to them? We are going deeper into the mountains to live by slashing and burning the land where no one will disturb our peace."

At his words my heart felt weary with oppression. I wondered if they could find the peace of mind they sought in a deeper recess of

the mountain than Macun, a recess which offered no guarantee of a livelihood in the days to come.

"The thaw has not yet set in, have you food enough to last until it does?" I asked.

"No. We shall live as long as we can, and we may die.... That's all there is to it. My very life is a nuisance to me now."

As she listened to him, the sobs of the man's wife shook her shoulders. The three children who were in my arms also burst into tears.

I fought back my own tears as I was standing blankly in the darkness. If all the people left one by one in this manner, on whom could we rely in making the revolution? Why had our revolution entered this dead end? The consequences of the reckless Soviet policy had been too destructive.

"Things will be put to rights soon. So don't feel too discouraged. Let's wait till things are smoothed over."

I sent him and his family back home with an escort of my men. I changed my plan of staying overnight in the barracks of the 2nd company and called on old man Choe Ja Ik at Xidapo. The heart-rending incident of the miserable family prompted me to try to dig into the depths of the people's minds. Choe Ja Ik was the father of Choe In Jun, who, after joining the Wangqing special detachment, had been promoted to company commander and then to regimental commander of an independent brigade before he fell in battle. Whenever I visited Sancidao, I had paid a call on Choe Ja Ik.

Being a well-informed man, he had even served as secretary of

the northern political and military administration headed by So Il. Moreover, he was open-minded and candid, and told me many instructive things whenever I met him.

"Old man, how are you getting along these days?" I greeted him.

"I think I am living just because I am alive," he said bluntly in reply to my greetings.

Believing that his intonation expressed the people's mind, I asked again, "Is your life in the guerrilla zone so hard?"

At this question, the old man flew into a rage and began to grumble, saying:

"I put up with the Soviet government when it took away my work animals and farm implements. I guessed that we were following the example of collective farming in Russia, for which the Russians had collected such things. But when I saw the people from the Soviet collecting spoons and chopsticks a few days ago for what they called a communal eating house, I spat at them. I said, 'Shall we old people leave our under-floor-heated rooms and walk to and from the public eating house in the cold weather three times every day? I cannot live in this manner any longer. If you are going to create a hell and call it a *kommuna* or *artel,* do it yourselves, young men. We are already out of breath and can't keep up with you any longer.' And then there was what they called the purge of feudalism, when old people were subjected to criticism by their daughters-in-law at mass meetings. Has anything so ridiculous ever happened in the five-thousand-year-long history

of our country? And still, my son, In Jun, told me not to slander the Soviet. So I was going to break his back."

If the father of a commander of the guerrilla army could spat on Soviet policy, there was clearly no need to probe the attitude of other people any further.

Later, during the terrible days of the ultra-Leftist struggle against the "Minsaengdan," and during the sad days when the soldiers and the people were bidding a tearful farewell to one another prior to the break-up of the guerrilla zones, I often recalled the old man lamenting over the things that were happening, pounding his breast with his fists, at the time when I met him.

Less than half a year after the establishment of the Soviet government, the relations between the Korean and Chinese peoples had deteriorated again. Most of the landowners who had been expropriated were Chinese, so it was natural that a situation similar to one at the time of the May 30 Uprising should recur. The Chinese nationalist army, which was opposed to the Japanese, once again became hostile to the Korean communists. The national salvation army and Chinese landowners were now our enemies, in addition to the Japanese and Manchukuo armies.

The anti-Japanese guerrilla army found itself once again in the restricted circumstances of the days of its establishment, when its small units had to hide in the back-rooms of other people's houses. The guerrillas once again had to be billeted cautiously on Korean settlements. It was quite impossible to rename ourselves as Chinese special detachments. Whenever they met us, the national

salvation army units would attack us, calling us *"gaolibangzi"* (a Chinese derogatory term for the Koreans–Tr.). Guerrilla activity was effectively reduced to a semi-underground struggle.

Everything that had been built up by our year-long struggle was being brought to nought.

Our comrades began to develop divergent opinions of Soviet policy. Some of them said that, since things had come to this, we should go to Russia to learn the methods of revolution and then make a fresh start; some of them insisted that, since the way the people in Jiandao were doing things would make a mess of the revolution, we should return to our own ground and fight in our own way; and another man let slip that it would be better to go home and fulfil his filial duty to his parents than to fight for something which was not much like a revolution. The Chinese comrade who wished to go home was allowed to do so, and another Chinese comrade who wished to study in the Soviet Union was sent there.

Even in this state of affairs, the people in charge of the guerrilla zone could not bring themselves to change their policy. The east Manchuria ad hoc committee which was in a position of leadership had no defined line of its own with which to amend the policy of the Comintern.

Somebody had to smooth over this chaotic situation and save the guerrilla zone from collapse, even at the risk of being stigmatized as a Rightist. This task required determination and the formulation of new theses capable of countering the Leftist Soviet

line. It was about this time that I wrote a thesis on eliminating factionalism and strengthening the unity of the revolutionary ranks and published it in a pamphlet.

I had made up my mind to take issue with Tong Chang-rong at Macun over the type of government to be established. However, county party secretary Ri Yong Guk and a few others dissuaded me from doing so. They said it would be useless to argue with him because the "Decision of the East Manchuria ad hoc Committee on the Great Programme of Building the Soviet" had already been issued to its subordinate units and a Soviet government had been established at Sishuiping. They even warned me that if the argument went the wrong way, I might be punished. Ri Yong Guk told me briefly how Kim Paek Ryong had been charged as a Rightist because of his careless criticism of the Soviet.

Kim Paek Ryong was working as a member of a county party committee in north Manchuria. At the time when propaganda was at its height prior to the formation of the Soviet in Jiandao, he came, by way of the east Manchuria ad hoc committee, to Wangqing district No. 5, which had been selected as the first demonstration unit for the establishment of the Soviet government.

When he heard that a Soviet government was going to be set up in the district, he said that it was premature to have it in east Manchuria. Because of this single statement, he had been stigmatized as a Right opportunist and became the target of active measures. The incident ended with his escape to north Manchuria.

In the winter of 1934, two years after I heard the story of his

case from Ri Yong Guk, I met Kim Paek Ryong at Badaohezi, Ningan County. At the time he was the secretary of the district party committee.

He recollected with sadness the incident in the autumn of 1932 in which he had been branded as a Rightist capitulator because of his statement that a Soviet government was premature. By the time I met him, the Leftist Soviet policy had been rectified, and the people's revolutionary government had long been administering the guerrilla zone, so he did not hesitate to criticize the proponents of the reckless, Leftist Soviet line. In my talk with him I found him an extremely intelligent and upright man.

I asked him why he had said that it was premature to establish the Soviet.

"The reason is simple," Kim Paek Ryong replied. "When I was in Gayahe, I talked with a lot of peasants and found that they did not even know the meaning of the word Soviet. So I said it was premature to create a Soviet which was beyond the people's comprehension."

In fact, the people in those days did not understand the meaning of the word, and this fact indicated their lack of preparedness.

The old people in Gayahe who participated in the election to the district Soviet took the word "Soviet" to mean *soksaepho* (automatic gun–Tr.).

"I watched the platform after the election," one of them remarked, "for I had been expecting automatic guns from the Soviet, the guns that would kill many Japanese. But it produced

only a red flag."

Some of the people from Macun, who attended the ceremony for the establishment of the Soviet at Wangqing district No. 2, mistook the word "Soviet" for *soebochi* (tin pail–Tr.). Another villager was said to have asked voters to take a close look at the Soviet and see whether it was large or small. Some other villagers were said to have gone out with baskets to gather wild vegetables, because they had nothing special to offer the Soviet, an important guest.

These subjective interpretations of the meaning of the word or comical mistakes were due, of course, to the people's ignorance, and in particular to ineffective propaganda on the part of their leaders. The titles of public lectures, for instance, were full of loanwords such as Soviet, *kolkhoz* and *kommuna* which were beyond the people's comprehension. As for the Soviet itself, the propagandists themselves had no clear idea of what it was.

After the establishment of Soviet power everywhere, the radical elements who had been poisoned with Leftist ideas swaggered about, shouting loudly about the dictatorship of the working class, poor peasants and hired farm hands, as if the revolution had already been carried through.

In spite of the advice of the comrades at Wangqing, I did challenge Tong Chang-rong to a debate about the appropriate form of government.

"The birth of the revolutionary government in Jiandao and its proclamation is an event to rejoice at. But, Comrade Tong Chang-

rong, I cannot remain a silent onlooker when our policy of the united front is being encroached upon by the Soviet line."

Tong Chang-rong looked at me in surprise.

"It is being encroached upon? What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"As I told you at Mingyuegou, we have adopted the line of rallying all the patriotic, anti-Japanese forces, who are interested in our revolution, into a strong political force, and we have striven to implement this line at the cost of our blood in the homeland and Manchuria over the past years. In the course of this struggle, we have united many people, including patriotic believers, shopkeepers and manufacturers, junior officials and even landowners. But the Soviet policy has rejected them all indiscriminately. Until yesterday, they supported or sympathized with the revolution, but now they turn away from it or are opposed to it. The relations between the Korean and Chinese peoples have been aggravated once again."

Tong Chang-rong smiled, patting me on the wrist.

"That is quite possible, but it is not a matter of great importance. What is important is that the Soviet government has met all the requirements of the people. The revolution is triumphing. The workers and peasants, the vast majority of the masses, are following the Soviet government. What is there to be afraid of? I believe that, with the support of the workers and peasants, we can carry out whatever revolution we need. We have to be prepared to lose a minority, don't we?"

"I admit that there may be losses. But why should we reject people who can be won over? Our general strategy is to isolate the enemy as far as possible and win over as many people as possible. That is why we have risked our lives working among the anti-Japanese nationalist forces over the past year. We communists have managed to recover the prestige that was damaged by the May 30 Uprising, and we have resolved the discord between the Korean and Chinese peoples by dint of painstaking effort. But now there is the danger again that the results of these great efforts may be brought to nothing overnight."

"Comrade Kim Il Sung, surely you are too pessimistic?"

"No. I am in the habit of always looking on the bright side. The revolution will, of course, continue its victorious advance. But, Comrade Tong Chang-rong, I cannot help being deeply worried about the negative consequences of the Leftist policy in east Manchuria. I believe that the party in east Manchuria must give prudent consideration to this matter."

"So you mean that the policy should be reconsidered?"

"Yes, the policy should be reconsidered as well as the form of government that shapes the policy."

Tong Chang-rong frowned disapprovingly and then said, "Comrade Kim Il Sung, there may indeed be errors in the policy of the Soviet government, but the form of the government is inviolable. The policy concerning the establishment of Soviet power comes from the centre."

The argument continued.

He persisted in his opinion, describing the Soviet as an absolute. He was a man of moderate character and kind heart, but a die-hard.
He was well-informed, but dogmatic in his thinking and practice.

We resumed the argument on another day, when the point at issue was whether to maintain the Soviet or abandon it, and if it was to be discarded, what form of a new government should be adopted.

I said that, since life had proved that the Soviet was not suited to the guerrilla zone in east Manchuria where the task of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution should be addressed, the Korean and Chinese communists must resolutely change the form of government, and adopt a policy capable of meeting the requirements of the people in order to calm down the chaotic situation.

In reply to my cogent argument, Tong Chang-rong said, "I, too, admit that the Soviet does not suit the specific situation of east Manchuria and that some of its political measures have resulted in losses to the revolution. I now understand why the other day you expressed your apprehension concerning the united-front line being encroached upon by the Soviet line. Comrade Kim Il Sung, the grave developments in east Manchuria in recent months have compelled me to give serious consideration to your warning. To our regret, however, we have not yet decided on a form of government that can replace the Soviet."

I was pleased by this change in the opinion of the secretary of

the ad hoc committee. He was no longer the same die-hard who had insisted that the Soviet was the only type of government for the communists at the high tide of revolution when the masses were in buoyant spirits.

"The Commune and the Soviet are the only forms of working-class government that mankind has ever discovered, aren't they?" Tong Chang-rong asked, and gazed at me. His eyes seemed to suggest that, if I had a form that might convince him, he would not choose to object to it.

"If that is so, then let us make up a suitable one for ourselves," I said.

"For ourselves? I'm afraid that I'm not such a great genius. How can we make up things that are not mentioned in Marx's classic works?"

I could not agree with this view or attitude which regarded things as immutable and absolute, from which one could not deviate.

"Comrade Tong Chang-rong, did the French working class refer to any classics when they created the Commune? Was the Russian Soviet proposed by the founders of Marxism in their classic works? How can you regard the Soviet as the brainchild of a genius? If the people had not required it, if the Russian situation had not required it, I think the Soviet would not have emerged in the arena of history."

Without giving any sign of what he thought, Tong Chang-rong produced a large tobacco pouch from his pocket, filled his pipe

and set it between his lips, then offered the pouch to me. He used to carry the tobacco pouch and the pipe in his hand while inspecting the guerrilla zone. When he met a peasant on the way he would fill the pipe and then offer it to the peasant. He was a man of peculiar character, and this simplicity of his won him love and respect from the people in the guerrilla zone. In winter he went about in a fur cap like those worn by local peasants.

His silence vexed me, but the fact that he refrained from further argument was a good omen.

Following my conversation with him, I met Ri Yong Guk, Kim Myong Gyun, Jo Chang Dok and some other military and political cadres, and discussed with them the question of replacing the Soviet with a new revolutionary government. We debated the matter seriously for several days.

For purposes of a smooth discussion, we emphasized the importance of a criterion for defining the form of the government.

I asserted that we must not make the criterion too complicated, and that, since we were all fighting for the people and were their faithful servants, determined to dedicate all our lives to their cause, we must draw the criterion from the character of our revolution at that stage, laying emphasis on whether the government we were going to establish would be able to champion the interests of all sections of the population and whether it would enjoy their enthusiastic support.

On hearing this, my comrades cheered, saying that everything was now clear to them, that a government which was to champion

the interests of all sections of the population must be a united-front government, since the term "all sections of the population" would mean not only the workers and poor or hired peasants, but other broad sections of the people, that a united-front government would suit the character of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution, and that they would welcome such a government with open arms.

I again emphasized that the united-front government must be a people's revolutionary government based on a worker-peasant alliance. Nowadays, this is known in the history books as the line on the establishment of the people's revolutionary government.

There is no need to mention the result of our vote, for they believed that the form of people's revolutionary government we chose suited to east Manchuria, where Koreans were the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants, was ideally suited to the character of the Korean revolution which was directed at democracy and against imperialism and feudalism, and that it met the requirements of the people. We discovered the criterion for the form of government in the people's requirements and in a means of championing and representing the people's interests.

After deciding on the form of government, we agreed to set an example in one district and, if the result was accepted as good, to extend the example to other revolutionary districts. District No. 5 was chosen as the unit in which to set an example.

Ri Yong Guk, Kim Myong Gyun and I visited Wangqing district No. 5 and attended the meeting to elect the district

committee of the people's revolutionary government. The meeting was held at the village of Xiamudan, two and half a miles away from Sishuiping. The day was the anniversary of the MOPR, a Russian acronym for the International Organization for Assisting Revolutionaries. The Executive Committee of the Comintern decided in 1923 to establish this organization for the purpose of assisting the families of revolutionary martyrs, and set March 18 as the international anniversary of the MOPR.

Jo Chang Dok, chairman of the fifth district Soviet government, showed us into the office of the Soviet, where I talked to about 20 peasants from Gayahe.

"We have decided to set up a new government to replace the Soviet government. It must represent your will. What kind of government would you like to set up?" I asked.

An old man rose and answered, "If the government to be set up will make our life easier, we'll ask for nothing more."

I declared excitedly that a people's revolutionary government would be established in place of the Soviet government, and that the new government would be the first genuine people's government in the world history of political power.

"This government will represent and champion the interests of all the people who love their country and their fellow people. It will fulfil their most cherished desires. What are your cherished desires? The people's revolutionary government will fulfil all of your desires to own land, to have the right to work, to educate your children, and to have equality for all."

The people from Gayahe fully supported the line of the people's revolutionary government which I explained to them.

Prior to the ceremony to proclaim the establishment of the people's revolutionary government, we saw to it that all expropriated private property was returned to the former owners. In order to compensate for what had been damaged or consumed after expropriation, Ryang Song Ryong even organized an armed raid on a lumber station. The cattle and horses captured from the enemy in that battle were used by the peasants to cultivate the land distributed to them in the spring of that year.

At the meeting I made a speech to the effect that the people's revolutionary government was truly a people's government, and then the government's ten-point programme was announced.

This programme was later incorporated almost without amendment into the Ten-point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

Still vivid in my memory is the image of the county party secretary, Ri Yong Guk, during the meeting at the village in Sishuiping. While everyone was enjoying themselves dancing together, he sat in a corner, shedding tears.

I slipped away from the dancing party and walked over to him.

"Comrade Secretary, why are you sad when everyone is dancing?"

Without even attempting to dry the tears trickling down his cheeks, Ri Yong Guk heaved a deep sigh.

"I can't see why these people do not spit at me. The Wangqing

people have suffered from Leftist evils entirely because of me. But they thanked me. Commander Kim, you are the man who should receive thanks from them."

"Our people are generous and good-natured. The fact that instead of settling accounts with you the people thanked you, Secretary, means that they have accepted the line of the people's revolutionary government wholeheartedly. From now onwards, let us give our minds only to the future."

"I have not been living in my right mind, but in some other man's. You have opened my eyes to a truth of genuine value. Let us live for the people! What profound meaning there is in this simple motto! I will remember it all my life," Ri Yong Guk firmly resolved, squeezing my hand.

He was not able to live up to his pledge, for the east Manchuria ad hoc committee dismissed him from his post of secretary of the county party committee. The ad hoc committee said that Ri Yong Guk was dismissed because he had belonged to the M-L group and the Wangqing county party committee was guilty of an ultra-Leftist error in implementing the Soviet line. It also said that he was suspected of having been involved in the case of the "Minsaengdan."

The charge that Ri Yong Guk had belonged to the M-L group was not true. When involved in youth work at Xilinhe he had been recommended for the post of secretary of the Young Communist League under the east Manchuria ad hoc committee by a man who had been involved in the M-L group. That was all. It was

unreasonable and immoral that the secretary of the county party committee was alone held responsible for all the evils resulting from the ultra-Leftist Soviet line. If Ri Yong Guk had deserved the punishment of dismissal, then what punishment should have been meted out to the people who had imposed the Soviet line upon their subordinates and the men who had forced him to implement the line?

The charge that Ri Yong Guk had been a “Minsaengdan” member was totally unfounded.

I stated on several occasions that he had been neither a factionalist nor a “Minsaengdan” member.

However, while I was in Luozigou for negotiation with Wu Yi-cheng, Ri Yong Guk was executed on a false charge of being a “counterrevolutionary.” His records contained no evidence to prove him to be a “Minsaengdan” member. He had once taken refuge in the Maritime Province of Siberia from the wholesale arrest and he could have lived there in peace as an exile for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, he had returned to Jiandao and plunged into the tempest in order to serve the cause of the revolution.

I still do not understand why it was necessary to label such a faithful and honest man a “Minsaengdan” member.

Not long after the establishment of the people’s revolutionary government in the district No. 5, Tong Chang-rong came to me and said, with a pleasant smile on his face, “Comrade Kim Il Sung, we are going to discuss the matter of a change in the political line before long, with the participation of a man sent from the

Comintern. I hope that you, Comrade Kim Il Sung, will make the keynote speech, since you have the experience of having established the people's revolutionary government in the district No. 5."

In the summer of that year, an important meeting was held to discuss the change in the political line. The meeting was attended by a man who had been sent to east Manchuria from the Comintern, who brought with him a document concerning the change in the line.

At the meeting I proposed the line of a people's revolutionary government as a united-front government based on a worker-peasant alliance, and explained once again the draft of the government's policy, which included land reform and other democratic measures to be implemented by the government in the fields of the economy, education, culture, public health and military affairs. Our policy was in agreement with the new line formulated by the Comintern. The man from the Comintern expressed his full support for and approval of the line on the establishment of the people's revolutionary government.

The meeting, which lasted many days in an atmosphere of serious debate and ideological struggle, adopted a decision to reorganize the Soviet in accordance with our line of the people's revolutionary government and to combat the evil consequences of the Leftist Soviet line in all the guerrilla zones.

After the meeting, all the Soviets in east Manchuria were reshaped into people's revolutionary governments. In places where

the conditions were not ripe, measures were adopted to form peasant committees and gradually reorganize them into a people's revolutionary government. Property that had been expropriated in the name of the abolition of private property and consumed by the people in the guerrilla zones was compensated for by the new government in cash and in kind.

The people's revolutionary government, which was run by the people, its masters, implemented democracy for the popular masses, the overwhelming majority of the population, and exercised dictatorship over the enemy.

The establishment of the people's revolutionary government in Gayahe and the meeting that had adopted the changed line led to the emergence of a people's revolutionary government in every district of the revolutionary organization in east Manchuria, and also in every village. Each district people's revolutionary government had its own chairman and vice-chairman, and nine to eleven executive committee members. It also had departments of the land, military affairs, economics, food, communications, and medical services.

This was the embryo and prototype of the people's government to be established in the liberated homeland.

The people's revolutionary government distributed land to the peasants without compensation and enforced an eight-hour working day in all the guerrilla zones. In those days there were approximately a thousand workers in the Xiaowangqing guerrilla base. Most of them were lumbermen, raftsmen and charcoal

burners. Five hundred of them worked at Sancidao, the administrative centre of the district No. 2, and the other five hundred at the foot of the Fangcao Mountains near Macun. They all benefited from the eight-hour working day.

The people's revolutionary government took stringent measures to ensure that private entrepreneurs doubled the workers' pay.

The government also placed the forests in and around the guerrilla zones under its control and prohibited the felling of trees without its permission.

In these circumstances, the Japanese manager of the Qinhe lumber station at Daduchuan and Chinese lumber dealers came to the guerrilla-zone authorities to negotiate permission for timber-felling. The matter was settled so that the purchasers paid one *yuan* for a piece of lumber, but payment was made in kind, in items such as clothing, food and other consumer items.

The people's revolutionary government established the Children's Corps schools and gave the children free education, and it ensured that all the population received free medical care at the hospitals at Lishugou and Shiliping in the guerrilla zone. A law on women's equality was enforced and women participated in public life and work, on a basis of equal rights with men.

Printing works, tailors' shops and weapons repair works were operated in the guerrilla zone.

Cultural activities in the guerrilla zones produced many famous songs of lasting significance for our people, and theatrical art flourished, producing many original works, which later developed

into such masterpieces as *The Sea of Blood, The Fate of a Self-Defence Corps Man*, and so on.

The term "Soviet," symbolic of inhumanity and expropriation, remained only a memento of the past. The people who had fled to the enemy-held area from the evils of the Soviet policy began to return to the guerrilla zones one by one or in groups. Old people freely visited their neighbours, carrying their pipes at their waists. The guerrilla zone rang once again with the laughter of a large and harmonious community of people who trusted, loved and relied on one another.

The valleys and mountains of Wangqing, which had withstood the severe winter, began to be adorned with various kinds of rustling flowers: the throbbing of a new life was in evidence.

This life roused such envy that the son of a landowner, who had been held hostage at Xiaowangqing by Commander Chai's unit, begged to be allowed to live in the guerrilla zone.

4. The Man from the Comintern

In April 1933, when our struggle against the Leftist deviation was at its height in the guerrilla base, Tong Chang-rong came to see me in the company of a middle-aged man dressed in *dabushanzi*. The man appeared like a gentleman and had a gentleman's manners. Seeing me from a distance, he smiled and raised his hand above his head in a gesture of greeting. His eyes were shining in such delight, I might have taken him for an old acquaintance of mine.

On shaking hands with him, however, I found him to be a stranger. But strange to say, I still had the feeling that this stranger was an old acquaintance. So I received him kindly, with a smile.

This mysterious guest was Manchurian provincial party committee member Pan, an inspector from the Comintern. Just as Wei Zheng-min used to be addressed as Old Wei, this man was addressed as Old Pan. Pan is the Chinese pronunciation of his surname. According to Chinese custom, an elderly or respected person was given the title "Old," which was used as a polite way of addressing him. Few people called him by his real name Ri Ki Dong or by his nickname Pan Qing-you.

Inspector Pan was renowned as a revolutionary and party worker among the communists in Manchuria.

I first heard of Pan from Wang Run-cheng. When Pan worked as secretary of the Ningan county party committee after the September 18 incident, Wang Run-cheng was a member of the committee for propaganda under him. Wang said that he was put in charge of propaganda on that committee on Pan's recommendation, and he was very proud of the fact. According to him, Pan was a veteran who graduated from the Huangpu Military Academy, participated in the uprising at Wuchang and the northern expedition in China, and studied in the Soviet Union. He had also been the secretary of the Suining central county party committee. Wang said that he had been charmed more than once by Pan's noble qualities and keen understanding.

Wang's respect for him was quite exceptional.

Hearing about him from Wang, I was delighted at the fact that able revolutionaries like Pan were working in our local areas.

I later heard more about Pan from Choe Song Suk and Jo Tong Uk, who came from north Manchuria. Choe Song Suk said that she had been advised by him to come to Wangqing, and she described in an interesting manner how she had participated under his guidance in the May Day demonstration in the streets of Ningan.

These previous contacts led us to spend much time on recollections of our common acquaintances Wang Run-cheng and Choe Song Suk.

"Is Comrade Choe Song Suk from Ningan well?" Pan asked at

the beginning of our conversation.

His inquiry made it clear to me what Choe Song Suk had meant when she said that Pan's consideration for his subordinates was his particularly good point, and I was deeply moved.

"Yes. On her arrival from north Manchuria she was elected to the Dawangqing Soviet. She has now been elected to the women's department of the Xiaowangqing district committee, and is actively involved in the work of the Women's Association."

"Does she go about on horseback over here, too?"

"So I have heard, but I have never seen her riding a horse."

"She learnt to ride, and resolved to join the cavalry of the revolutionary army. She is a bold and determined girl."

"Then we Wangqing people are very fortunate! Don't you regret having sent her to us?"

"Why should I regret it? Her family is in north Manchuria, but I told her to come to east Manchuria. To be candid, Jiandao is the centre of the revolutionary struggle in Manchuria, so I told her that if she wished to do her bit for the revolution, she should go to Wangqing, to where the base is, to the people's land; that I expected a great deal from Jiandao, and that I, too, wished to come and work here."

Though I was grateful to Pan for acknowledging east Manchuria as the centre of the Korean revolution, I felt somewhat ashamed to hear it. I wondered what impression he would be given by the Leftist abuses in the guerrilla zone when he witnessed them. Of course, I had previously known almost nothing of his political

ideas and attitude. Though he was a man of broad political perspective and rich experience in the struggle, he could not always be expected to oppose the Leftist trend unreservedly.

However, I set great store by Wang and Choe’s opinion of Pan. They often emphasized that Pan, being an experienced man, had never suffered from prejudice against his subordinates and dealt with every matter on the basis of his own conviction, with fairness and prudence. Moreover, Pan produced a good impression on me when I first met him.

That day’s conversation allowed me to get to know him. We parted with a promise to have more serious talks later.

The visitor from the Comintern had timed his visit badly for me, for I had to go to command my unit in the fight to repulse thousands of “punitive” troops who were attacking us in waves.

“Then I must go with you to fight,” he said. “Please give me an old rifle at least.”

Pan insisted on taking the field with us for at least one day, saying that as an envoy of the Comintern, if he returned without so much as seeing how we were fighting in east Manchuria, he would feel ashamed of himself and would regret it all his life.

“Comrade Pan, bullets do not make exceptions for inspectors from the Comintern. There will be many chances to see battle, so please rest from the fatigue of your journey today.”

After I had dissuaded him, I went to the battlefield.

The enemy had surrounded the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone on three sides, and had been attacking us persistently for three days.

In stubborn defensive tactics, we mowed him down. The enemy suffered hundreds of casualties before he retreated. The “punitive” forces, which had invaded the guerrilla zone in the direction of Guanmenlazi and Mt. Ppyojok under cover of spring fog, began fighting among themselves, in the style of a tragi-comedy, which was much talked about among the inhabitants of Xiaowangqing. Pan, too, burst into laughter at the news.

His appearance in Wangqing provoked different reactions among the inhabitants.

Those who, regarding the Leftist Soviet line as the Comintern’s policy, had placed themselves at its beck and call, thought that Old Pan would support their position, and that his appearance would, therefore, be a good opportunity to apply sanctions against the proponents of the line of the people’s revolutionary government and brand them as Rightists, so that they would no longer dispute the form of government.

On the other hand, those who, denouncing the Soviet line as Leftist, had worked all along for the establishment of a new form of government in accordance with the line of the people’s revolutionary government, watched Old Pan’s every action closely, apprehensive that their anti-Soviet position might be rejected by him or that, in the worst case, they might even be punished in the name of the Comintern. Many of them foretold that Pan’s visit would complicate the situation in the guerrilla zone, which had just begun to shake off the grip of the Soviet line.

The former group was in triumphant mood; the latter was in a

state of mental defeat. Both attitudes sprang from the fact that they regarded the Comintern's authority as absolute. The Comintern, which was capable of disbanding a party or trying a man for his crimes, seemed as awesome to them as an international supreme court. They thought that the Comintern could redeem or destroy the fate of a revolutionary as it pleased.

Pan's appearance placed a strain on the guerrilla zone. I, too, could sense the strain in the atmosphere at every moment.

The attitude which Pan would take towards those of us who had supported the line of the people's revolutionary government against the Soviet line of the Comintern and denounced the Soviet measures as Leftist abuses was a matter of serious concern for us.

I thought it fortunate for our revolution that the Comintern had sent its representative to east Manchuria, where the people were groaning under the yoke of Leftist high-handedness. At a time when the advocates of the Soviet line and the line of the people's revolutionary government were arguing with each other over who was correct, Pan's appearance would initiate a decisive phase by his supporting or rejection of the different lines.

Nobody had yet given any assurance that the Comintern would support our position. But I was determined to lodge a protest to Pan against the directives that had been issued in turn by the Comintern, the Manchurian provincial party committee and other organizations, directives which did not suit the actual conditions in the guerrilla bases. I was also ready, if necessary, to argue with him about theoretical questions, in order to rectify the ultra-Leftist tendency in

the implementation of the Soviet line and the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle. I was not in the least afraid of punishment or sanctions. In short, I believed that the decisive moment had arrived.

During those days certain disgruntled comrades apparently sent a letter of complaint to the Comintern, requesting it to settle the dispute in east Manchuria. Having examined the letter, it had apparently sent Pan, a Korean, to settle the dispute, because the majority of the inhabitants in east Manchuria were Koreans. Inspector Pan himself later said that such a letter had been received by the Comintern.

When I came back from the battle in defence of Xiaowangqing, Pan came to see me again. His expression was not so radiant as it had been when I first met him. From the inspector’s expression, which betrayed heavy anxiety behind his vague smile, I judged that he had finally found himself faced with a choice between the grim realities on which political philosophies had become entangled. It seemed that he had clashed with Tong Chang-rong over the issue of the political line.

I saw to it that Pan stayed at old man Ri Chi Baek’s house, the largest one in Macun, and spent some ten days talking with him in the front room of the house.

Pan spoke Chinese fluently, and he spoke in Chinese from the start, so I was obliged to do the same. We talked mainly at night and early in the mornings. During daylight hours I had no time to spare to talk with him because I was commanding my unit. Pan travelled around the guerrilla zone during the day, busily

acquainting himself with the actual conditions there.

People who have frequently stayed away from their homes will understand very well how intimate travelling companions who share the same lodging can become, despite the inconvenience, and how charming and interesting stories become woven through their intimate relations. Pan and I, too, became intimate during those ten days, so intimate that we became like members of one family.

Although Inspector Pan was my elder by more than twenty years, as well as being a veteran revolutionary with a rich experience of struggle, he never put on airs or betrayed any awareness of his seniority. He talked to me frankly and enthusiastically, placing himself on comradely terms with me.

First we introduced ourselves, tracing our pasts, but avoiding formal matters relating to revolutionary practice. I did this first, and then Pan followed suit. And then we took turns in filling up the blanks in our past experiences or relating our impressions of the events we had experienced, not noticing that the night was passing.

Pan became very curious about me when he learned that I had been in prison four times before I was even twenty years old.

"So you are my senior, Comrade Kim, in terms of imprisonment, aren't you?"

He said that he, too, had some experience of prison life in Harbin, and that as a result of a large May Day demonstration he had organized, the party organization in Ningan County had

suffered wholesale destruction. The organization was crushed by the merciless repression of the Manchukuo authorities and the "punitive" actions of the Japanese army, and the party members and hardcore elements were scattered far and wide, he said. Pan attributed the losses to the mental vertigo that had afflicted him with the rapid growth of the party ranks and of their energetic activities. But he recognized that the lessons of the May Day demonstration had provided the political motive for the foundation of the Ningan guerrilla forces under the command of Kim Hae San and Ri Kwang Rim.

"People realized after a few lashings in prison that we had organized the demonstration clumsily and belatedly. By organizing it in the streets of the county town we actually exposed party members to enemy repression at a time when we should have sent the organization deeper underground and prepared it for an armed struggle!"

Whenever he mentioned the demonstration he was angry with himself. But he admired the demonstration we had organized against the Jilin-Hoeryong railway construction project. He was the type of man who is fair and generous in assessing other people's achievements while underestimating or even denigrating his own success.

"You say you celebrated your twenty-first birthday a few days ago, so you are only half as old as I am, but I must say, Comrade Kim, that you are my senior not only in terms of imprisonment, but also in terms of life experience," Inspector Pan said when he

had heard my personal history.

I could not help feeling awkward as he repeated that I was his senior.

"Comrade Pan, if you praise me to the skies, I am afraid you will make a fool of me."

He shrugged his shoulders in the way Russians do.

"I should like you to know that it is discontent with my own life which underlies my admiration of you. I am a man who has not led a satisfactory life. At my age of forty-three I can say that the prime of my life is past, but I have done nothing which I can be proud of. That is my sorrow."

"Don't be too modest. You have experienced the scorching sun in the south and the snowstorms in the north; your life has known laughter, anguish and tears. To be frank, I am not fond of people who look down upon themselves. How can you say that the prime of your life is past at only a little more than forty?"

He was not displeased by my criticism. I thought he was too modest with himself. The meritorious service he had rendered as secretary of the Ningan county party committee and the Suining central county party committee, and the role of a midwife he had played in the birth of the Ningan guerrilla forces, not to mention his activity in southern China–all these could never be ignored. The Suining central county party committee was a very large organization that had been formed by the merger of the Muling, Ningan, Dongning, Mishan and other county party committees. Once rumour had it that Pan

was to receive honourable promotion to the post of a senior cadre in the eastern area bureau of Jilin Province, which was to play the role of an intermediary liaison echelon between the Comintern and the Manchurian provincial party committee. I was not sure whether he actually had been promoted or not, but the mere fact the Comintern had appointed him as the inspector in charge of the work in east Manchuria was eloquent proof that he was a man of high reputation.

Our conversation proceeded with an exchange of information and opinions concerning the current political questions of mutual interest.

The first subject of our discussion was the Comintern and the international communist movement. This discussion was extremely valuable to me, for although I was in touch with the workers of the Comintern's liaison office, I had never had candid and serious talks with them.

I explained to him the efforts made by the Korean communists to implement the decisions of the Comintern, and then clarified our position and attitude towards its line and directives.

"We consider that the Comintern fulfils the role of the General Staff of the international communist movement excellently. Over the past years it has achieved a great deal by rallying the communists throughout the world into an international alliance and struggling against imperialism, for peace and socialism. In the clear understanding that the Comintern is the international centre which performs the function of centralized control of the

communist movement, we will, in the future as in the past, remain loyal to its rules and its line. But, Comrade Pan, I would like to take the liberty of telling you something else about the activity of the Comintern."

The final part of my statement immediately made him tense.

"How should I take what you have said? You don't happen to hold any opinion opposed to it, do you?"

"Perhaps an opinion, or a complaint. I have wanted to tell to the Comintern a few things for a long time."

"Speak up, whatever you have on your mind." He gazed at me with curiosity.

I believed the time had come when I should speak out to the Comintern.

"I do not support any faction, but I very much regret the Comintern's decision in the past to disband the Korean Communist Party. Factions existed not only in the Korean Communist Party; the forging of signatures by means of potato stamps was also practised by the Indochinese Communist Party and other parties, wasn't it?"

A look of surprise, rather than tension, flitted across his face. My words had taken the inspector by surprise, a man who had been through all manner of bitter experiences.

"As a Korean communist like yourself, Comrade Kim, not as an inspector from the Comintern, I regarded the disbandment of the Korean Communist Party as a disgrace, and share you in your regret that the Comintern had declared its disbandment. But there

is one thing you must understand in this matter, and that is, why the Indochinese Communist Party remains in existence, while the Korean Communist Party was disbanded. It is because a prominent figure like Ho Chi Minh represented Indochina in the Comintern. By contrast, in those years the ranks of the Korean communist movement contained no such outstanding figure or centre of leadership who would be recognized by the Comintern."

His view that one of the major reasons for the party's collapse was the absence of a leader or a centre of leadership shocked me, for I had considered factional strife within the party to be the primary cause of its disbandment. It took Pan's cogent analysis to discern that the disbandment of the Korean Communist Party was due to the absence of a leader, a man of world renown acknowledged by the Comintern, who could resist his party's disbandment.

In addition to the matter of the Comintern, we also had a valuable discussion concerning the practical questions arising in the Korean revolution.

Inspector Pan said that the Korean communists must work hard to found a new party of their own, instead of living in a state of frustration, and sharing lodgings with the party of another country because most of their party members were in exile after the party had ceased to exist.

"I am not saying this because I am a Korean revolutionary, but I do believe that the Koreans must have their own communist party. If the Korean communists regarded the disbandment of the Korean

Communist Party as depriving them for good of the chance to rebuild their party, that would amount to suicide. It is the legitimate and inviolable right of the Koreans to have their own party. One may share another man's room for a couple of years, but not for ever."

Pan's conviction that the Korean communists must rebuild their party completely was in agreement with our policy of founding a party, which had been adopted at the Kalun meeting.

"You are right," I said, encouraged by his words. "If a Korean does not strive to rebuild the party, he should be regarded as having abandoned the Korean revolution. We must not be like a man who shares another man's room, studying his expression, and wasting time. On the basis of this point of view, we put forward a new policy of forming grassroots party organizations first, and then establishing the party from bottom to top by expanding and strengthening them, and we established a party organization, the Society for Rallying Comrades, three years ago in line with this policy."

I went into the details of the historical background to the formation of the first party organization, as well as describing my own involvement in this work and its expansion.

Pan listened to me with close attention.

"Comrade Kim, I may be a man of fancy, but you are a man of thorough practice. It is simply marvellous. But, look here. It's a problem that there are too many factions in the Korean communist movement. So you must not recognize the factionalists, but make a

fresh start among young people. You can do nothing with factionalists around you. Many of them have become dogs of the Japanese. And many of the confirmed factionalists who are not Japanese dogs are involved in a tug-of-war struggle for hegemony, instead of working for the revolution. In order to combat factions, we must fight the Japanese successfully. If our ranks grow stronger, and the hardcore elements are united in the course of the struggle, they will lay the foundation for the establishment of the party."

His words excited me greatly. They were, of course, not new to me. The basic policy we had maintained was that the party should be formed with young people who had not been infected with factionalism.

I renewed my resolve to found the party by uniting the Korean people and building up its core, so as to accomplish the basic task of national liberation.

It was fortunate that Pan and I had the opportunity to discuss questions concerning the international communist movement, the Comintern, and the founding of the party in Korea, and reach complete agreement.

Our conversation naturally turned to the issue of Soviet power, which had been occupying everybody's attention in Jiandao. I was honestly eager to hear Pan's opinion of the Soviet government to which the people had turned their backs, at which they had spat, and from which they stood aloof.

"Old Pan," I said casually, "what is your impression of the

guerrilla zone you have looked around on your first visit to Jiandao?"

"I would like to pay my respects to the people of Jiandao and the revolutionaries who have built a wonderful society on this barren land," Pan said in a loud voice, unbuttoning and opening the front skirts of his gown. "The people here have done a lot of work and endured tremendous hardships. But I must say that it is a matter of great regret that an unwelcome spectre is hovering over this marvellous land."

From his emotional tone, I could tell that he was greatly excited.

"A spectre? What do you mean by that?" I asked.

He picked up a large pinch of cut tobacco from the pouch which old man Ri Chi Baek offered and began to roll a thick cigarette.

"I mean the Leftist Soviet line. It is pulling down the tower which has been built by the strenuous efforts of the people of Jiandao. I can't understand this at all. How is it possible for the revolutionaries of Jiandao, who pioneered the Manchurian revolution, to take leave of their senses to such an extent?"

"To tell you the truth, I find the Leftist deviation so upsetting that my hair may turn white."

"How can they be so blind and stupid?... I talked with them, and they were totally ignorant of the Soviet government in Russia. Comrade Tong Chang-rong is a man of rich fighting experience and gentle character....

"What a preposterous mistake! It is clearly no accident that

letters of complaint were addressed to the Comintern. You have had plenty to worry about, I expect."

He glanced at me in commiseration.

"I wouldn't mind personal distress, no matter how great. My heart ached at the sight of people who were suffering under Leftist high-handedness."

Pan puffed at his cigarette nervously and continually, as if to give vent to his anger.

"I have encountered a stroke of good luck in the midst of misfortune, which is that the line of the people's revolutionary government was born of the soil overgrown with Leftist weeds, the government which enjoys the people's support and will save our revolution from the crisis. Comrade Kim, a short while ago I informed Comrade Tong Chang-rong that your proposal is marvellous."

"Do you mean to say that you also support the line of the people's revolutionary government?"

"If not, why should I have said so to Comrade Tong Chang-rong? He has also expressed his support for the line. He seems to have been strongly impressed by your statement that anything the people like is good. Let us now work better, with firm confidence in ourselves."

Pan grasped my hand in an unconscious but significant gesture, and then released it.

In this way the Comintern's support for our line on the people's revolutionary government was confirmed.

Pan said it was a remarkable success for us to have gained the freedom of activity of the guerrilla army by forming a special detachment and improved relations with the national salvation army of the Chinese nationalists. He encouraged us revolutionaries in east Manchuria to follow up this success.

Saying that our line on the people's revolutionary government was basically in accord with the line of the revolutionary masses' government proposed by the Chinese party, he explained the Chinese line briefly.

The Chinese line proposed a new and clear strategy on the Manchurian issue, centring on the switchover of their political line. It had been formally issued in the name of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, but was in fact drafted by the Comintern. It could be said, therefore, to represent the will of the Comintern.

Their idea of forming peasant committees as organs of rural government attracted our attention. The proposal was that the peasant committee should manage relations between the peasants and the guerrilla army, supplying food to the army and organizing armed self-defence guards on a routine basis, and that the party should ensure that hired farm hands and poor peasants become the leading force in the peasant committee, and thus rally the masses of middle peasants around them.

In other words, the Comintern had recognized the irrationality of the Leftist Soviet line in the question of political power, and had acknowledged the need to replace it with a new form of

government. After all, this was the confirmation of the correctness of the line of the people's revolutionary government which we had proposed.

However, Inspector Pan was very concerned about the name of the peasant committee. Although peasant committees were better suited than Soviets to the situation in Manchuria, he said, a policy which was orientated towards the hired farm hands and poor peasants would not be able to rally the broader masses behind them. He stressed that the people's revolutionary government was an improvement and advance, a type of united front which was capable of rallying all sections of the population–workers, peasants, students, intellectuals and others–who were opposed to the Japanese. He said he would express this opinion in a letter to the Comintern and the Manchurian provincial party committee.

"What does it matter whether we call it a peasant committee or a people's revolutionary government? All that is required is to satisfy the people's desires. A people's revolutionary government will do in a place where we can put up such a sign, and a peasant committee will do where a committee is more suitable, won't it?"

In this way, I tried to calm the inspector's anxieties, but he was still not at ease.

"You are right in general, but the name of the government must cater to the people's preferences. In any case, I must bring the matter to the Comintern."

I am not sure whether he did express his decision in a letter to the Comintern or not.

In the wake of these events, the Soviets in all the guerrilla zones in east Manchuria were replaced by people's revolutionary governments or peasant committees, the Worker-Peasant Guerrilla Army was renamed the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, and the Red Guards were reorganized as the Anti-Japanese Self-Defence Corps.

The inspector's visit raised a whirlwind that swept away the outmoded political order of the guerrilla zone. The Juche-orientated revolutionary policy which we had maintained since our days in Jilin won international support and encouragement, and the correctness of all our lines and policies was confirmed yet again.

This does not mean, however, that we agreed with everything that the Comintern did or that we obeyed its orders blindly. While respecting the measures taken by the Comintern, I applied my own independent judgement to them, regarding them from the point of view of the interests of the Korean revolution and the world revolution.

The most doubtful aspect of the Comintern's strategy and the steps it had taken were its views on, and its manner of dealing with, the Korean revolution as a link in the overall chain of the world revolution.

When the October Socialist Revolution triumphed in Russia, and the ideal of socialism became a reality, the communists of all countries were faced with the noble task of both preserving the gains of the revolution and following up its success on a world scale.

In response to the requirements of the times, Lenin established the Third Communist International in 1919. Its historic mission was to organize the struggle of the working class and the oppressed nations of the whole world to free themselves from imperialist oppression and the chains of capital, and to develop this struggle on an international scale. This was a militant mission that differed from those of its predecessors, the First and Second Internationals, and fitted with the requirements of new times.

One of the major tasks of the Comintern at the time was to safeguard and defend the Soviet Union. The defence of the positions of victorious socialism was inseparable from the expansion of the socialist cause. Without defending them, it was impossible to spread and further develop the success of the October Revolution on a global scale. It was quite natural that the defence of the Soviet Union became an international slogan for all communists, and that the implementation of this slogan became the major content of the international communist movement.

These relations, which were historically inevitable and essential, supplied grist to the mills of those who opposed communism and lent plausibility to the reactionary bourgeois theoreticians who denounced the communist parties of various countries which implemented the orders of the Comintern as "stooges of the Soviet Union" or traitors to their own nations.

The communists in every country should have learned a lesson from this and combined their national and international duties in an appropriate manner. The Comintern should also have regarded

this matter as highly important. If it was to fulfil its mission satisfactorily, the Comintern, while emphasizing the defence of the positions of victorious socialism, should have given sincere support to the communist movements in other countries, and should, in particular, have championed the interests of the lesser nations suffering under imperialist oppression and assisted their revolutionary struggles.

The Comintern, however, paid little attention to this need. Some officials of the Comintern talked loudly about the revolutionary movements in large countries, but dealt in a slighting or arbitrary fashion with matters relating to the revolutions in small countries. They discriminated too much in their views and their attitudes towards the revolution in different countries, in proportion to the share they could contribute to the building of an international bulwark for the defence of the Soviet Union.

Certain individuals and theoreticians occupying important posts in the Comintern spread the view that victories for the revolutionary movements in large countries would automatically lead to victories for the revolutionary struggles or independence movements in the adjacent small countries. Figuratively speaking, they held the view that if the head ripens, the ears will also ripen of their own accord.

This view gave rise to a sycophantic tendency among communists of small countries, who abandoned the independent position that one's own effort and the efforts of one's own people were the motive force of revolution, and began to rely on large

countries. It also produced a chauvinistic tendency among the communists of the large countries, who ignored the communists of small countries and restrained their independent activities.

Thus it was not fortuitous that the revolutionaries' confidence in, and unsullied devotion to, the Comintern and the international communist movement became stained, despite the fact that these communists from different countries had been tremendously inspired by the great events of the birth of the socialist state and the foundation of the Comintern, and looked up to them as an ideal and a beacon-light as they advanced through the flames of struggle.

After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution and the foundation of the Comintern, loving support and a yearning for communism surged across the face of the world in an inexorable wave.

Renowned persons in all parts of the world were quick to join the ranks of those who espoused communism. Many of the major figures of the time, regarding communism as the only idea that represented the future of mankind, made efforts, through different channels, and regardless of their political affiliations and religious beliefs, to establish contact with the newborn Soviet Republic or the Comintern and receive aid from them.

Many of the nationalists in Korea also espoused, supported or sympathized with the idea of communism. Authoritative Christians, Chondoists and other religious believers were among them. For instance, Hyon Sun, the third minister of the Seoul

Jongdong Methodist Church, represented the Korean religious organization of "Faith in Jesus" at the Far Eastern People's Congress held in Moscow in January 1922.

Hyon Sun was a minister of high reputation in Korea and he was elected one of the members of the Korean Provisional Government when it was formed in Shanghai. According to material which our comrades obtained from the Comintern's archives in the Soviet Union a few years ago, when he attended the conference he carried with him a letter of attorney signed by Kim Pyong Jo, one of the group who drafted the Independence Declaration of March 1, 1919, and by Jo Sang Sop, Son Jong Do, Kim In Jon, Song Pyong Jo and other ministers. When Hyon Sun filled in the form issued by the Koryo Department of the Russian Communist Party, he stated that he was connected with the Shanghai Communist Party, and that he had spent three weeks in Russia in September 1919. In answer to a questionaire, on his "Aims and hopes," he wrote, "I aim for the independence of Korea and hope for the realization of communism." This document was only recently obtained by our comrades.

Of course, I am not sure how deep an understanding he possessed of the new idea of communism, or how warmly he sympathized with it, but it seems that he expected a great deal from the Comintern.

Ri Tong Hwi, the first Prime Minister of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, was involved in the communist movement. It is well known that he was sent as a representative to

Moscow to report to the Comintern on the results of a joint conference of the Koryo Communist Party.

The reformist force of Chondoism also sought alignment with the Comintern.

Choe Tong Hui, a son of Choe Si Hyong, the second leader of the Chondoist religion, and a grandnephew of Choe Je U, the founder of Chondoism, represented the reforming wing of Chondoism. In his capacity as chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the Emergency Supreme Revolutionary Council of Chondoists, he spent some time in Vladivostok in Russia, working hard for negotiations with the Comintern. He wrote letters to Katayama Sen, Injelson, and other officials who were working at the Oriental Department of the Comintern, requesting them to give the support needed by the movement for Korea's independence, and declaring that active cooperation between the Chondoists, the servants of the poor people, and the Comintern, the vanguard of the working class, would guarantee the success of the revolution in the Orient.

Choe Tong Hui even sent a letter to Chicherin, at that time People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Republic, requesting him to send within two years the weapons, explosives, ammunition, cavalry equipment, and means of transport required to equip fifteen composite brigades of the Koryo National Revolutionary Army which it was planned to organize. The fact that the reformist forces of Chondoism sought a new route for the independence movement, despite the hatred and denunciation of

conservative Chondoists, was worthy of national admiration. But neither Soviet Russia nor the Comintern complied with their request.

Ryo Un Hyong, alias Mong Yang, also visited Moscow in 1919 and spoke with Lenin on the question of Korea's independence.

People would not believe it if they heard that an anti-communist element such as Syngman Rhee once supported Soviet Russia. But it seems to be true. There is information that he once visited Moscow and requested a colossal amount of financial aid, and that when his request was ignored, he turned against Soviet Russia and the Comintern and became ultrapro-American.

Korea, the territory of which was only a hundredth of the Soviet Union, a land of thatched mud huts huddled together and skinny, hobbling donkeys, obviously appeared too small and too miserable to attract the attention of the Comintern officials. Even in the years when we were waging an armed struggle against the Japanese in Manchuria, their views on Korea did not change greatly. I greatly regretted the fact that the Comintern was so indifferent to the fate of the peoples of small countries and the national liberation struggles of the communists of small countries. Needless to say, this unkind treatment and cold attitude merely poured oil on the flames of our determination to establish the principle of Juche in the revolution and liberate our nation by our own efforts.

I was annoyed most of all by the fact that we lacked the strength to oppose or correct the attitudes and activities of the Comintern

with which we disagreed, and were unable to control the way in which the Comintern's work was organized and its chronic malady of red-tapism, although we knew this might lead to the sacrifice of the Korean revolution or place a stumbling block in the path of its Juche-oriented development.

We, the communists of the new generation, longed for the Comintern to understand the problems of the Korean communists and march in step with our aspirations and our unshakable resolve to carry out the revolution in our own way.

Pan's appearance in east Manchuria at a time when we were struggling with complex problems requiring prompt solutions was welcome. My acquaintance with him was one of the most significant events in my life. It was a good thing that there were people in the Comintern who understood us and supported us. His statements that the ranks of the Korean communist movement should be renewed with trained hardcore elements who had not been infected with factionalism, and that a party of the Korean people should be established produced an especially strong impression on me. His advice encouraged me and strengthened my sense of independence in thinking and in practice. Had it not been for his influence and comradely encouragement, it would have been impossible for me to fight effectively, even though I risked my life, in defence of the Juche spirit of the Korean nation and our revolution at a time when the struggle against the "Minsaengdan" was being conducted in such a dreadful manner.

Pak So Sim introduced me to Marx's *Capital*, Shang Yue taught

me the *Dream at the Red Mansion,* and now Inspector Pan had given me sincere support, encouragement and sympathy and so strengthened my conviction that Koreans must not forget Korea.

In all history of my revolutionary struggle against the Japanese imperialists I never discussed the fate of the Korean revolution and the political line of this revolution so enthusiastically, sincerely and so seriously as I did with Inspector Pan. He was a rare theoretician, with an unshakable commitment to the revolution. Had he been alive to work with us when we advanced to the area of Mt. Paektu in command of large forces in the latter half of the 1930s, he could have made many theoretical and practical contributions to the solution of the difficult problems facing the Korean revolution.

My acquaintance with Pan opened my eyes to the vital need for a theoretician capable of guiding and steering the practical struggle, in addition to the man of practice who was also important in the revolutionary struggle.

Following our unforgettable discussions at Xiaowangqing, Pan became my most intimate friend and comrade. Although he was more than twenty years older than me, we forged a relationship as friends and comrades in a matter of ten days, and this friendship and comradeship were as intimate as those of ten years duration. But they were not cemented by any material or personal interests. This exceptionally warm friendship was derived from a common, long-cherished desire for the liberation and freedom of Korea and from a shared way of thinking and aspiration to independence in

all matters.

The depth of a friendship cannot be measured by the length of its duration or by the number of conversations. A long period of association does not necessarily indicate a deep friendship, nor does a short period of association mean friendship is shallow. The essential thing is the viewpoint and attitude one maintains in approaching man and his destiny, in approaching one's nation and its destiny. Depending on this viewpoint and attitude, the warmth of friendship may be redoubled or it may cool. Love for man, love for one's fellow people, and love for one's country are the touchstone of friendship.

When Inspector Pan was leaving Xiaowangqing, I saw him off on horseback as far as the boundary between Wangqing and Hunchun Counties. Because he limped a little, I had seen to it that he could travel on horseback.

During our ride we talked a lot, and during a two days' stopover at the village of Shiliping, we discussed a host of subjects, including the international communist movement, our relations with the Chinese party, and matters relating to the Korean revolution at the present and in the future. We also made firm pledges to one another.

The subjects we discussed at the time would be good material for the plot of a novel. Ri Pom Sok's military academy was in that village, the O Jung Hwa's family were taking refuge there.

Pan even touched on his own family life. He said his wife was

only half his own age. I don't remember exactly whether he called her O Yong Ok or O Pung Ok.

I asked him why he had only married when he was over forty.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed, "no need to ask why. I did not have the charm a husband needs, so girls stayed away from me. Who would ever love a lame man like me? If it were not for Madam O, I might have remained an old bachelor."

He seemed to have been born with a low opinion of himself. I sympathized with him deeply for his delay in marrying.

"I expect Madam O has a sharp eye for a man. I have heard that she is a rare beauty. Late love must be as sweet as honey."

"Of course, but strangely enough, it was she, not I, that proposed. Anyway, late love is indeed exceptionally sweet."

"Rumour has it that she is the envy of all in north Manchuria."

"But, Comrade Kim, I hope you will not take so long as I did, if only for the sake of male dignity."

"Well, I, too, may be late. It does not depend on what I wish."

We chatted and laughed, sitting in a grass field near the village of Shiliping, and deepening our friendship.

Pan said that he had become deeply attached to Wangqing, and regretted parting with me. His next destinations were Hunchun and Helong.

"Comrade Kim, I will carry your image in my memory all my life. I am very happy to have met you in Wangqing, Comrade Kim Il Sung," he said, with a serious look, his eyes brimming with tears, his hand squeezing mine, as he crossed the

border.

"So am I. I am most fortunate to have met you, Comrade Pan. Frankly, I don't want to bid you farewell."

"How could I wish to part? I wish that after this journey I could come to east Manchuria with my wife and work hand in hand with you, Comrade Kim. I am outdated in some ways. A little stained.... Please be Korea's Ho Chi Minh."

With these words, Inspector Pan took his leave of Wangqing. When he was some distance away, he turned round and raised his hand above his head. Looking at his hand as I had when I first met him, I felt as if a long time had passed. The details of his expression seemed to have been imprinted on my eyes to remain there for decades.

Feelings of loneliness and sorrow at parting from a man with whom I had forged a friendship in so short a time gripped my heart as he looked back at me, and I wondered why the farewell was so sad. Pan was smiling, but he, too, looked sad. His smile lay heavy on my heart. If he had not smiled, my heart would have been much lighter. He left me, wishing that he could return but died in Hunchun and we never met again.

He was murdered by Pak Tu Nam, the political commissar of the Hunchun guerrilla battalion. Pak Tu Nam was criticized most severely by the inspector at an enlarged meeting of the Hunchun county party committee which discussed the change in the revolutionary line. Branded as a ringleader of factional strife, he was dismissed from his post as political commissar. While the

inspector's guards in the yard of the house were looking at some Model 38 rifles that had been captured from the enemy, and the inspector was busy writing something, the traitor picked up one of the rifles and shot the inspector dead. The news shocked the people in Wangqing.

When I heard the news, I locked myself up in the front room of Ri Chi Baek's house, where Pan and I had discussed the revolution and the meaning of human life, and wept over his death all day long.

5. The Memory of a White Horse

I was intending to leave out this anecdote, because I considered a war-horse too insignificant to be given a space in the memoirs of my eighty years of life, in which there were so many heroes, so many benefactors and so many events that should be remembered.

But my affection for this horse seems to tint my memory of it too strongly, and the impulse to make it known to the public is too strong for me to keep it to myself. Moreover, the animal is unforgettably linked with many people by the bonds of human feelings. The stories of these people are also too valuable to be consigned to oblivion.

In the spring of 1933 I came into possession of a horse.

One day an official of the people's revolutionary government of Shiliping came to see me with some guerrillas, and brought me a white horse. In those days, the headquarters of the Wangqing guerrilla battalion was located in the valley of Lishugou, Macun, Xiaowangqing. The procession these people formed appeared too ostentatious for a company leading a war-horse with them.

The visitors hitched the horse in the front yard of the

headquarters, and then announced their arrival.

"Commander Kim, we respectfully wish to present a horse to you, who have to travel many rugged miles. Please accept this gift," said the official, speaking for his company.

I was embarrassed at the sudden appearance of the delegation and at their solemnly decorous manner which seemed more appropriate to some grand function. Moreover, I was immediately surprised by the size of the group, larger than a squad of soldiers nowadays.

"I am afraid I am not worthy of such rich consideration as to allow me to ride about on a horse at the age of just twenty," I said, attempting to express my thanks modestly. The elderly official gesticulated in surprise.

"Rich consideration? The Japanese battalion commanders ride around pompously on horseback to show that they are fine officers. Why should our guerrilla commanders be any worse than them? I have read a book which says that Red-gowned General Kwak Jae U commanded his cavalry on horseback. A military commander needs dignity before everything else."

"Where did this horse come from? It's a draught horse from a peasant's family, isn't it?"

The government official waved his arms in denial.

"No, it isn't. It's a pet horse. Do you remember the old man, a former farm servant, who was elected to the government council at Shiliping the other day?"

"Of course. I even spoke in his support."

"This is a present to you from that old man."

"I can hardly believe that he had such a wonderful horse," I remarked, looking closely at the horse with its saddle and stirrups hanging on both sides, while I stroked its back. There was really no doubt that it was a farm horse. I could not make myself believe that any peasant in the mountain valley of Shiliping could possess a sleek pet horse like this, still less the former servant of a landowner.

The official insisted that it was a pet horse, probably because he was afraid I might refuse to accept it if he admitted the truth.

I don't remember the old man's full name, but his surname was Pak.

Old man Pak had a reason for making a present of the horse to me. It is a moving story which should be told here.

The story begins at the time when he left the landowner's house after serving out his term. When the old man became too old to work, his master released him. In return for his life-long service, the landowner gave him a white foal which was a few months old. Immediately after it was born, the unfortunate animal suffered serious bruising, when it was stepped on by its mother, and it was ailing in the stable, too sick to romp about outside. It was infirm and undernourished.

The niggardly landowner pretended to show him favour by giving him the sick animal, which might die the same day or the next, which was already as good as dead.

Old man Pak came home to his hut with the sick foal in his

arms, shedding tears. The sight of this sick foal, given as a reward for all the drudgery he had performed for decades made him feel sad at the absurdity of his whole life and at the hardness of the world.

Nonetheless, the old man, who led a solitary, lonely life, treasured the animal as if it were a precious stone in his hands and tended it with all the care he could muster. The foal grew into a full-fledged horse. Whenever he felt lonely, he would go to the horse, and grumbled to himself, giving vent to his feelings at his sad plight, and grieving over his fate. The horse was a loving son and daughter and friend to him.

Having been mistreated all his life, the old man ranked himself with draught animals and accepted worldly abuses as natural. When on rare occasions he was treated as a man should be, he would feel uncomfortable or awkward.

This old man was elected to the government council for the Shiliping guerrilla zone. There is surely no need to explain how deeply he was moved and how many tears of thanks he shed on that occasion.

This explains why he brought the white horse to the government yard one evening.

"Mr. Chairman, please send this white horse on my behalf to Commander Kim Il Sung. Today for the first time in my life I was treated like a man, thanks to the commander. As a token of my deep gratitude to him I wish to present my pet horse to him, the horse which I have fattened for many years. Please convey

my thanks to him."

On learning why the old man had sent the horse to me, I felt it improper to decline the present.

"I don't really feel I should accept the gift, but the kindness of the old man's heart obliges me to accept it. Please convey my thanks to him," I told the official from the Shiliping government, as I took the tether from him, and then I asked him why so many people had come when one driver would have been sufficient.

"Commander Kim, we wished to see you on horseback, so the guerrillas and the people have sent their representatives. Please mount the horse!" the official said earnestly. The men from the 2nd company, too, insisted that I ride the horse. Only after seeing me mounted, were the visitors satisfied and returned home to Shiliping.

I was very grateful to the old man for his kindness and his respect for me, but I did not ride the horse for many days. I was afraid that, if I went about on horseback, I might appear extravagant in the eyes of the people and my men.

I gave the horse to Ri Ung Man, who was working in the arsenal, the man who had brought a box of Browning pistols in order to be allowed to join the guerrilla army. He was brave, but one of his legs had been amputated after a serious wound.

The leg had been amputated by Jang Un Pho, the doctor of the guerrilla-zone hospital which was located near the battalion barracks at Xiaolishugou. He represented the medical profession in Xiaowangqing, the only doctor, but a man of versatile abilities,

practising both medicine and surgery, and treating all cases.

The hospital was managed by a mutual aid society, and patients who needed treatment were required to bring a letter signed by the chairman of the council of the people's revolutionary government. The mutual aid society acted as a medical council and would often decide that bones damaged by bullets had to be amputated. Drugs were scarce and no other remedies were available, so drastic measures had to be taken.

The doctor had improvised a scalpel by grinding down the spring of a worn-out clock and he used this for surgery. That was how Ri Ung Man had become a cripple and had been discharged from the guerrilla army. After leaving hospital, he stayed at Ryang Song Ryong's house near the hospital, living under the care of Ryang's mother for some time.

Ri Ung Man found the white horse very useful. He rode to and from the arsenal, cheerful in his life and work.

In the course of time another white horse came into my hands. It was captured from the Japanese in the battle at Dahuanggou. Some veterans say that it was captured in the battle of Zhuanjiaolou, but I don't think it is worth the trouble of denying that. Where it came from is not essential. The point is that a horse which a Japanese officer had ridden about came into our possession, and it was a perfect war-horse that won everyone's admiration.

In that battle I had made some of my men lie in ambush, and the Japanese officer on the horse was unfortunate enough to be hit first

and he fell to the ground. Then a strange thing happened. The horse, having lost its rider, came running over to the slope where my command post was located, instead of running away to the enemy camp.

When he saw the horse, Jo Wal Nam, my orderly, tried to drive it away towards the road, in case it should attract the enemy's attention to the command post. But although the orderly threw tree stumps and empty cartridges at the horse, the animal would not return to its dead master, and approached us. However hard the orderly tried to chase it away, the horse simply balked, with its legs rooted to the ground.

"Why insist on driving him away when he refuses to go? Don't be too cruel," I rebuked the orderly, and I approached the horse and stroked its mane.

"He's attracting the enemy's attention to the C.P.," the orderly shouted in surprise, shielding me with his body. "Take care, please."

"Ho, ho! They haven't got time to try to spot the C.P. They're already turning tail."

In this way the horse came into the possession of the guerrilla army.

The men tried to describe the incident as something extraordinary, the strange story of an enemy horse coming over to our side.

"This animal can tell the difference between Koreans and Japanese," said a man who saw its identification tag and

discovered it was born in Kyongwon (Saeppyol), Korea. "He came straight over to us because he recognized us as Koreans."

"The Japanese officer must have been cruel to his horse," another man remarked, as if seeking a more authentic motive for its action. "Otherwise, it wouldn't have come over as soon as its master fell."

On our way back to Macun from the battle, we gave the horse to an old Chinese man to use as a work animal. In Jiandao, horses and cattle were widely used as draught animals.

A few days later, the old man came to us and returned the horse to us. He said that the horse's pasterns were too slender and weak for a draught horse. Worse still, he added, it was so wild that he could not even approach it or touch it, let alone tame it.

One of my comrades-in-arms said, "This horse is destined to be one of our company after all." My comrades advised me to take the horse, since I was suffering from an ache in my calf muscle. They even warned me that if I overtaxed the ailing leg in a guerrilla war that might last for years, I might lose the ability to stand on my feet. The ache in my calf muscle actually bothered me considerably whenever I was on the march. The problem probably came from doing too much walking since my childhood. When I was in Jilin I travelled by rail or bicycle now and then, but in Wangqing, which was under constant blockade, such luxury could not be expected. The painful leg was a great physical handicap to me in the life of the guerrilla zone, which required forced marches of dozens or even a hundred miles over steep mountains almost

every day.

However, on this occasion also I declined to accept the advice of my comrades-in-arms.

Then the comrades called a party meeting and adopted a decision to the effect that I should travel by horse from a certain date. The decision was tactfully worded so that the battalion commander, Ryang Song Ryong, too, should ride a horse. Probably they anticipated that I would doggedly refuse if I was the only one to be mounted.

I obeyed the decision of the organization.

On the day when I first mounted the horse, my comrades surrounded me, clapping their hands in delight.

The horse's records said that it came from the Kyongwon war-horse replacement centre. Sometimes the sleek horse appeared greyish, sometimes snow-white. His pasterns were as slender as those of a race-horse, and he ran as fast as a tiger.

This horse carried me on his back to battlefields and sometimes through primeval forests for approximately two years, sharing every hardship with me. His image still rises out of my memory now and then, thrilling me with emotion.

My daily routine began with tending of the horse. I would rise early in the morning, pat him on the head and brush his coat with a broom. As I had had no experience of tending a horse, I did just as my grandfather in Mangyongdae had done when he tended a cow.

The horse jerked away whenever the broom touched him. Once when I was struggling with the horse, old man Ri Chi Baek gave

me a metal comb, and told me to comb the horse's back with it and see what would happen. I did as I was told, and the horse stood quiet with his hoofs stuck to the ground.

While saddling the horse one day, I discovered a pouch between the saddle-leather and the padding. The pouch contained a small notebook inscribed "Horse's Record," a metal comb, a brush, a piece of rug, and a pointed piece of steel. I could guess the use of all of the things except for the piece of steel shaped like a scalpel.

I picked up the steel tool and approached the horse.

Now came the miracle. He lifted one leg high, as a circus horse might. This suggested some relationship between the tool and his hoof, but I could not pinpoint exactly what. He circled around me a few times, then approached a stake a little distance from me, and rested one of his forelegs on it. I found dirt, stone splinters, and pieces of straw stuck between his sole and shoe. I removed them from his hoof, and then he lifted another hoof on the stake and looked at me as if in invitation.

While I was learning from guess-work how to tend the horse, a man from a horse-breeding farm in the homeland came to visit a relation in Xiaowangqing. He taught me the skills of grooming and horsemanship before he left for home. A horse detested its body getting dirty and splinters of pottery and similar things getting stuck in its hoofs, he said, so that it should be washed with clean water twice every day, combed, brushed and oiled, and dirt and straw pieces regularly removed from its hoofs. He made a point of wiping the horse well when it had been sweating or had been

exposed to the rain.

He also told me that hay and oats were essential food for horses, that barley and beans were also good, that horses must eat a little salt every day as human beings do, and that too much cold water was bad for them after heavy exercise.

In the course of tending the horse as I had been instructed, I got to know him better. He was always obedient to me. I was surprised at the cleverness with which he understood from my glances and hand movements what he should do, and he never failed to serve me to my satisfaction. As I caught glimpses of his character and noticed actions that reminded me of their artistically perfect beauty of human qualities which would win universal admiration, I sometimes wondered if this was really an animal and not a human being.

While he was clever and faithful to me, the white horse was also fierce. He tolerated no one except his master touching him or sitting on him. If some tomfool took his tether out of curiosity and tried to mount him, he avoided him by walking in a circle or kicking or threatening to bite.

Jo Wal Nam was one of those who was given the cold shoulder by him. First he stood the horse by the veranda and then, after gently combing his side, jumped swiftly into the saddle. But the moment his buttocks touched the saddle, the horse shied off to one side and he fell to the ground with a thud.

After this shameful defeat, the orderly hit upon a bright idea. He took the horse to soft ground, where his pasterns sank into the

mud, and while he was grazing, he slid onto his back. He failed again. He was thrown into the mud.

Next the young orderly tied the horse to a tree and gave vent to his anger by whipping him. After the incident, the horse ran away or kicked at him whenever he approached.

The orderly even cried in his exasperation. For all the efforts he had made to tame the animal, he could not even approach him, still less ride him. In the end he said he had to return to his company.

I said to him that the horse rejected him because he did not love him, and that, therefore, he should try to feel warmer devotion for him. I taught him how to tend the horse with great care.

The orderly followed my advice, and the horse naturally obeyed him in proportion to his kindness.

Time has obscured many details of my memories, but I can still picture a few events vividly.

Once I went to Luozigou to carry out political work among the people. O Paek Ryong and his platoon accompanied me. In those days, I used to sleep only two to three hours a day. The day's battle, training my men, and work among the people usually kept me awake until one or two o'clock in the morning, and sometimes right through the night.

When our company reached the foot of the Jiapigou Pass, I dozed off on horseback. Perhaps I had stayed up all night at Macun or at Shiliping the previous night. As the white horse was marching at the head of the platoon, nobody noticed that I was dozing.

As we began climbing the pass, the horse's gait changed.

The platoon leader O Paek Ryong noticed it.

The horse was scaling the slope carefully with his forelegs drawn in, and pace of the march was so slow that the platoon leader was irritated.

"How strangely he is walking today, this horse which is like an English gentleman!" O Paek Ryong thought to himself.

On the downslope, too, the horse walked with difficulty, his hind legs drawn in. In the meantime, the column far outmarched me, leaving myself on horseback and O Paek Ryong behind. The platoon leader was impatient with the horse, and worried about me, but he dared not lash the horse on which his commander was riding.

When he had climbed down the slope, the horse balked before a fallen tree on the Jiapigou Riverside. Seeing the horse, which normally leapt such fallen trees without any difficulty, hesitating before a small obstacle, O Paek Ryong grew even more suspicious.

"Why does the commander leave this lazy horse alone, without so much as shouting at him or spurring him on?" the platoon leader thought, looking up at me. Only then did he discover that I was dozing.

"What a fine show!" the platoon leader exclaimed aloud.

The horse's foreleg tapped on the fallen tree, and the sound woke me up.

"This white horse should be given a feast today," O Paek Ryong said, beaming with a broad smile and stroking the horse's

nape. I felt a great change must have taken place in the universe while I was asleep.

"Why a feast all of a sudden?"

The platoon leader explained to me with great enthusiasm how the horse had climbed over the pass and how he behaved when faced with the fallen tree.

"My father said that in ancient times the best horse in the country was called the state horse, so what about calling him that from now on?" the platoon leader suggested.

"Why should we simply call him a state horse? Your story proves that he is more than worthy of being called the heavenly horse...."

"What does the heavenly horse mean?"

"It means the best horse under heaven."

"Then let us call him the heavenly horse. Brother O Jung Hwa once told me that in some country a high title was awarded to a horse."

"So I've heard. The emperor of that country conferred the title of political administrator on his pet horse. His horse ate from an ivory trough and drank wine from a gold cup, and enjoyed respect from everyone. Shall we give him the title of *Ryonguijong* (a feudal post corresponding to the modern post of prime minister–Tr.)?"

"Anyway, this is a quite uncommon horse. He has no eyes in his back, how could he know that you were asleep?"

I spurred the horse, and he jumped over the fallen tree and

rushed forward. We overtook the platoon in an instant and arrived at the vicinity of the valley of Sandaohezi, Luozigou, where rocky peaks soared high on both sides of a stream which teemed with trout.

I drew a circle around the horse on the grass, and then coiled his tether around his neck. I gave the men their assignments for political work among the people at Sandaohezi, Sidaohezi and Laomuzhuhe. After dispatching them to their various destinations, I met the political operatives and the workers in charge of underground organizations who had been waiting for me by the riverside. I talked to them for a long time.

When I returned to the horse after all this talk, I was surprised yet again, for the horse was grazing within the circle I had drawn. It was indeed a rare horse.

The horse also helped to save the life of Hong Hye Song, a woman revolutionary. She had gone through high-school education in the homeland, worked underground along with progressive students and young people in Longjing, and then come to Wangqing which she regarded as the promised land, and was doing political work there.

Her father was a renowned doctor of traditional Koryo medicine. In the guerrilla zone, Hong Hye Song was able to draw on the medical expertise she had learnt from her father to give the guerrillas and the local inhabitants great help by treating scabies. This cheerful, sociable, courageous, and pretty woman political worker with a knowledge of Koryo medicine was warmly loved by

the soldiers and people in the guerrilla zone.

One day I was riding on the horse, as I went with my orderly to the village of Xidapo in order to carry out political work among the villagers. When we were not far from the village, we heard a sudden gun shot. Suspecting an invasion by the "punitive" force, we hurried toward the place from which the sound had come. We found Hong Hye Song who was caught in an enemy ambush on her way back after her political work in villages and fighting against heavy odds.

The enemy was shouting and threatening her with blank fire in an attempt to capture her alive.

I spurred my horse on towards her where on the brink of being taken prisoner, she was returning the enemy fire, and picked her up instantly. The horse, sensing my intention, shot off like an arrow and galloped for a couple of miles. Hong Hye Song was saved.

After that the horse became an object of universal admiration to the people in the guerrilla zone.

If she had not been killed in the enemy's "punitive" action at Baicaogou, Hong Hye Song would now be gratefully sharing with me in my recollections of the white horse.

I rode the horse to Liangshuiquanzi many times when I was building up a semi-guerrilla zone there. Our organizations were active in the villages of Nandadong, Beidadong, Shitouhezi and Kajaegol around Liangshuiquanzi and also in villages in the vicinity of Tumen, as well as in Luozigou, Sandaohezi, Sidaohezi, Laomuzhuhe and Taipinggou.

If I say that I nearly gave up this wonderful war-horse, the reader will not believe me.

It happened when, together with the men of O Paek Ryong's platoon, I was working among the people in the Gufang Mountains or a place nearby. Circumstances obliged me to decide to part with the horse. It was the time of the spring food-shortage, and the people were suffering from lack of food.

We attacked the enemy near that place on several occasions, capturing food and distributing it among the people. But the amount was too little to meet their need. We ourselves ate sparingly at each meal in order to save food grain for the people. In the circumstances, the horse's rations also had to be cut to the minimum. Even grain stalks to replace hay were scarce, to say nothing of oats, barley and beans, the nutritious feeds.

My loyal men spared no efforts to obtain feed for the horse. However difficult the situation, they worked hard to find oats and salt for the horse by going to neighbouring villages and even visiting people in the enemy-held areas. Some of the men even went out to glean harvested fields. They threshed the gleanings and put the grain in their pockets to give to the horse when they came back. When they approached the horse, he would poke his nose into their pockets.

They took loving care of the horse for my sake. Their devoted efforts were an expression of revolutionary comradeship and loyalty to me.

I was thankful to them for their friendship and loyalty, but I felt

very sad and uneasy. Whenever I saw them working with such great enthusiasm to obtain feed for the horse or care for it, I was haunted by the thought that I should no longer put them to such trouble simply for my sake. I was not used to accepting such services from other people. If anybody were to ask me when I felt most awkward during the years of the guerrilla war, I would answer that it was when I was treated unusually well by my men.

Whenever special benefits or privileges were offered to me, I felt sorry and guilty rather superior or self-satisfied, as if I were being put to the test.

Although the aching muscle in my calf was not cured and I would have to suffer for a few months longer, I made up my mind to give my pet horse to a peasant so as to relieve my men of this burden. If the horse was used as a draught animal in a semi-guerrilla zone, it would not be exposed to the dangers of the battlefield. I thought at first of giving it to the old man who had once been a servant and had given me his white horse, but I dismissed the idea for fear that he might feel embarrassed and upset.

I summoned the duty officer and told him to prepare a special noon meal for the horse even if it used up all the remaining feed.

"Feed the white horse with the best of the provisions today. Take him to the chairman of the Anti-Japanese Association of the village beyond the mountain in the afternoon. The remaining feed should be sent with the horse. Tell the chairman to give the horse to the poorest peasant who has no draught animal."

“Yes, sir,” answered the duty officer, but he hesitated to leave.

“Go and do as you were told.” I urged him sternly.

When the duty officer was gone, I thought things over, and regretted having given such cruel orders to send the white horse away. I went out of the room to bid farewell to him. As usual, I combed him and brushed him all over and stroked his nape many times. As I looked back upon the thousands of miles I had travelled with the horse, I felt as if my heart were breaking.

Then I was surprised to see tears trickling from his eyes as they were fixed on me. It was really astonishing that he should have a premonition of parting. The horse had evidently read my mind from my look.

For the first time in my life I realized that even in the world of beasts slaved under the lash, there were beautiful emotions that would increase and enhance the beauty of the human world.

“Forgive me, my pet. Though I am sad, I must bid farewell to you. Though the pain of our parting is tearing me apart, I cannot afford the luxury of riding about on you any longer. All the sufferings and hardships you have gone through for my sake will live in my memory as long as I live,” I thought, as I stood with my face buried in his neck for a long time.

Back in my room, I felt lonely for the rest of the day and could do no work. I even wondered whether I had made a foolish decision out of too great concern for saving face. But it would be absurd to change the decision that was already made. I waited for the evening report from the duty officer, hoping that the white

horse would be given to a hard-working and kindly man.

But the officer did not turn up at the appointed hour for the evening report. Instead, platoon leader O Paek Ryong brought me my evening meal as dusk was falling. Without any preliminaries, he simply begged me to forgive him.

"I have violated discipline, so punish me, please."

"Violated discipline?" I could not see what he meant.

"I have raided a lumber station, without obtaining your approval in advance."

He hastily explained why he had done it. The duty officer who received my orders in the morning, had gone to O Paek Ryong and told him about the orders, and that he would obey any orders from me except orders about the horse. He had asked him to discuss the matter.

O Paek Ryong sympathized with him. He told the duty officer:

"Perhaps the commander gave the orders because he was sorry to see his men taking so much trouble over the horse. But how can we allow the horse to be taken away from our commander, when he is still suffering from the aching muscle in his calf? If we find plenty of feed and then beg him to withdraw his orders, he may reconsider the matter. You should keep the horse out of sight for a while, instead of sending it to the neighbouring village. And I will go to the Qinhe lumber station to get feed. Don't tell the commander where I've gone."

The lumber station was a little more than ten miles from Xiaowangqing. One of the foremen was an acquaintance of O Paek

Ryong. They had probably got to know each other during the foreman's frequent visits to the guerrilla zone to fell trees.

The platoon leader went to the lumber station with a foraging party of several men. Saying that if he gave the feed to the guerrillas he might get into trouble, the foreman told the platoon leader to raid the lumber station instead.

Realizing that the foreman's suggestion was reasonable, O Paek Ryong arrested the sentry, then broke into the office where the other sentries and supervisors were gambling, and disarmed them instantly. The raiding party returned safely to base carrying with them four or five sacks of oats and beans.

I put aside my evening meal and went out of the room. The horse was in the stable, having been brought back from the hiding place.

He snorted, and nodded his head towards me as if in thanks.

I felt my nose tingle. I was glad to see the horse again. But how should I deal with the duty officer and O Paek Ryong who was reckless as a bear in Mt. Paektu and had plenty of guts, these men who had disobeyed their orders? How preposterous O Paek Ryong had been in thinking that his commander would withdraw his orders if plenty of feed was obtained, and how absurd ways his guts had led him to raid a lumber station! Though I was grateful to him, I was appalled at the thought of the catastrophe his recklessness might bring on us in the days to come, if it was not nipped in the bud.

The irony was that I, who never compromised with principle,

could not assert principle at the moment. I brushed the horse lightly on the back, and, when I saw him nodding with tears in his eyes, I did not feel like rebuking the platoon leader for disobeying the orders.

Moreover, his stubborn attitude made me disinclined to force him to send the horse away.

"Comrade Commander, please punish me or demote me, but I hope you'll understand that the horse must not be sent away anywhere as long as I am alive."

Having pronounced his ultimatum, he snorted as if he just fought a major battle.

I suppressed the impulse to hug him and pat him on the back in a show of thanks. More than once had I been moved by the loyalty of this peerlessly courageous platoon leader who had not hesitated to plunge through fire and water for me. He had followed me and respected me as he would his own elder brother, saying that it was Kim Il Sung who taught him to read and write the Korean alphabet, and it was Kim Il Sung who had opened his eyes to the things of the world.

I had also loved him and cared lovingly for him as I would for my own brother. This platoon leader whom I myself had trained had now raided the lumber station at the risk of his own life in order to save the white horse for me.

But for all this, he had committed a gross violation of discipline by foraging without approval from his commander. If he was forgiven, he might commit even a graver mistake. What was to be

done?

A commander needs to make a wise decision at such a moment.

"The soup is getting cold," he said worriedly looking down at the steaming bowl. "Please take your meal and punish me quickly."

I held back the hot tears in my eyes. I felt a lump in my throat at his staunch readiness to accept punishment.

When he was a member of the Children's Vanguard, O Paek Ryong had crossed to Onsong in the homeland with a *pijikkae* (matchlock) pistol he himself had made, shot a policeman at the customs house and snatched a rifle from him. He was as audacious as that as a boy. He had experienced all the hardships of life; growing up in a family of seventeen, he had sympathized sincerely and passionately with suffering people from his childhood. For this he was loved by all his comrades.

From his days in the Children's Vanguard, he was eager to join the guerrilla army. His antics included an episode involving empty cartridges: He once heard that an applicant for the guerrilla army needed a trustworthy reference or a rifle the applicant himself had captured from the enemy, or at the very least a stick grenade as a substitute for a reference. So he went to a battlefield where fire had just been exchanged. He tied the bottoms of his trousers with string, and then he held the waist of his trousers open with one hand while he gathered cartridges, live and empty, with the other hand and filled the legs of the trousers with them. Then, he came to the guerrilla army base, sweating all over. As he untied the legs

of his trousers, nearly a gallon of cartridges poured out.

"How about that?" he said, looking elatedly at the company commander. "Is this enough for me to be accepted?"

Instead of the answer he expected from the company commander, he saw the guerrillas burst into roars of laughter.

"Look here, Paek Ryong!" the company commander said, laughing. "What did you bring these empty cartridges for? They've already been used."

O Paek Ryong had thought that the empty cartridges could kill the enemy. When he realized his mistake, he sorted the live cartridges from the useless ones. The number came to hundreds.

So, the cartridges did serve as a reliable reference for him to join the guerrilla army.

Since enlisting he had fought courageously to take vengeance on the Japanese "punitive" troops for the deaths of his parents and brothers. As a raw recruit, he had many distressing experience. Once, while cleaning his rifle, he had let off an accidental shot and been punished for it.

The political instructor who punished him was an enemy spy. He had got himself promoted to company political instructor by worming his way into the confidence of factionalists who held important posts in the east Manchuria ad hoc committee and the county party committee, and was doing everything possible to undermine the guerrilla army.

The punishment he meted out to O Paek Ryong for the accidental shot was brutal and barbarous in terms of the code of

discipline and morals of the revolutionary army. As punishment he sent O Paek Ryong to the walled town of Mudan, where a company of the puppet Manchukuo army was stationed, with orders to take down and bring back the Manchukuo flag flying in the centre of the town. The orders, in fact, were intended to get him killed during this adventure in the enemy's den. His comrades-in-arms had all been worried that he would never return alive.

O Paek Ryong, however, went off to the town, which was 25 miles away from his company, and came back safely with the flag.

After that the spy in the guise of political instructor watched for a chance to do away with O Paek Ryong. He even went so far as to start an argument with the men who ate their rice in water. He preached that soldiers should eat solid food, without soup.

Once the company butchered a cow. The men, tired of eating "dry food," were delighted at the thought of eating their fill of beef soup that evening.

That evening, however, the dastardly political instructor had appeared again and said that if the men ate beef soup when they were not used to it, they would have loose bowels, and ordered them to eat only rice and meat, not the soup. So the men were denied the chance of eating the soup which they had been looking forward to.

Only O Paek Ryong and one other man disobeyed the orders and ate the soup. The wife of O Paek Ryong's second eldest brother, who was a cook, brought them the soup in secret. As bad

luck would have it, O Paek Ryong was caught by the political instructor in the act of eating the soup behind a stack of firewood in the yard of the barracks. This incident gave the spy a pretext for labelling him a "Minsaengdan" member. Had it not been for the references given by his comrades-in-arms, O Paek Ryong would have been executed on the false charge of belonging to the "Minsaengdan."

The spy's identity was later discovered and he was executed by O Paek Ryong.

O Paek Ryong had virtually been condemned to death penalty and it still rankled in his mind. If he was subjected to another penalty, wouldn't it leave an even worse scar?

"Comrade O, I am grateful to you for taking the risk of raiding the enemy camp for the sake of the white horse. But your breach of discipline is a grave error that must not be repeated by a commanding officer. This sort of thing must not recur. As I understand your feelings, I will not send away the white horse. Well, are you satisfied?"

"Yes, I am satisfied," the platoon leader replied with a grin on his face. Then he scampered off to his quarters like a child.

I settled his case with these few words of remonstration.

In the years that followed, the white horse served me as faithfully as ever.

I still remember an event that took place when the battle to defend Xiaowangqing was raging. At that time the enemy was invading Hwanggarigol at the end of the valley of Lishugou and

killing the people in the guerrilla zone. The mountains and fields were littered with dead bodies, and the houses were reduced to ashes.

I spent every day galloping about on my horse, commanding my men in the battle, in the thick of the fire. One day I organized the defences on Mt. Ppyojok, the next day I halted the charging enemy on Mapanshan, and the next day I provided covering fire for the evacuees from the hill behind Lishugou. In the course of this whirlwind of battle, I went through many hair-raising incidents.

In the barrage of fire, even the fur lining of my overcoat caught fire. The flames could have enveloped me in an instant, but I did not notice it. As my horse was galloping against the wind, the flames on the skirt of my coat flew out behind me.

It was only when the horse began to run with the wind that I discovered the flames on my coat. I had no time to pull it off, and if I jumped from the rushing horse, I might collide with a rock and kill or seriously injure myself.

At this critical moment, the horse slowed down in front of a snow-covered depression and then slid into it sideways, with his forelegs folded in. I stumbled into the snow, and the fire on my coat was put out as I rolled over in it.

The horse's two legs were bleeding.

Had it not been for the horse, I would have suffered fatal burns and not survived to tell the tale.

I marvelled at the horse's seemingly supernatural powers. How

could he sense that I was in a fire? It still remains a mystery to me. His unusual clarity of judgement might be attributed to animal instincts, but to what can one attribute his loyal devotion, the self-sacrificing devotion which led him to save his master, while injuring his own legs?

The expression says "a faithful dog and a pet horse," but I would rather change the word order and say "a faithful horse and a pet dog."

The white horse became a legend, beloved of all the people in the guerrilla zone. The story of the horse spread to the semi-guerrilla zones around Xiaowangqing and even to the enemy-ruled areas.

Wu Yi-cheng, too, heard the story and coveted the horse.

"Commander Kim, wouldn't you exchange your white horse for fifty war-horses?" he asked when I was at Luozigou negotiating with him for the formation of a common front with the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist forces.

I do not remember what I said to him in reply. I only remember that I returned to Macun on the same horse after the negotiations.

The white horse that had carried me over thousands of miles of wet and dry trails for nearly two years, with his shoes changed only occasionally, died at Xiaowangqing in the winter of 1934.

When I returned from the first expedition to north Manchuria, I found the stable empty. They led me to the horse's solitary grave, where the earth had been mounded up by my comrades-in-arms. I did not know how to express the depth of my sorrow.

Seeing how grieved I was, my men suggested firing gun salutes to the horse. But I declined, asking what was the use of a gun salute, for the horse had lived among the roar of guns all his life, so he should be allowed some peace at least in his grave. The grave is somewhere in Wangqing.

One day in the early 1960s, when O Paek Ryong was the head of the General Bureau of Guards, he and I went for a casual ride, and we reminisced about the white horse. Even though several decades had passed, the former leader of a guerrilla platoon could recall every detail of the horse's story.

Somehow the story became known to writers, Song Yong and Ri Ki Yong. An officer is said to have asked them to write about the white horse, but I am not sure how the matter came up and how it was settled.

The white horse that was born of the flames of the war against the Japanese and lived through fire all his life appeared on a small piece of canvas in the Korean Revolution Museum. The legendary anecdote of the white horse came to the attention of the artist Jong Kwan Chol perhaps through Ri Ki Yong or Song Yong. Jong Kwan Chol painted the subject in oils. I discovered the picture when I visited the museum at the suggestion of O Paek Ryong. It depicted me and the white horse. The canvas reminded me of the orderlies and O Paek Ryong, who had shared the horse's loyalty to me. I suggested that it would have been even better if these comrades had been shown together, and the artist changed the picture, following my advice, to include two orderlies. That is the

picture now on exhibition in the museum.

Whenever I missed those loyal orderlies and the white horse, I used to go to see them in the museum.

Nowadays, at the age of eighty, I occasionally picture them only in my memory. The image of my faithful white horse still moves as vividly before my eyes as he did sixty years ago.

If he had been a human being he would have won higher commendation than the most loyal of men.

CHAPTER 8

Under the Banner of the Antl–Japanese Struggle

Ri Kwang

Negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng

The Battle of the Dongning County Town

A Comment on Ultra-Democracy in the Army

Operation Macun

Arsenals in the Thick Forests

An Immortal Flower

February 1934-October 1934

1. Ri Kwang

I made friends with Ri Kwang in Jilin.

One day Kim Jun and his company from the General Federation of Korean Youth in East Manchuria brought a young man to me and introduced him. He was Ri Kwang.

Our comrades had assumed from his appearance in Jilin that he had come either to study, to get in touch with an organization, or to learn how the student and youth movement was progressing. Kim Jun hinted to me that Ri Kwang seemed to have come to Jilin to attend a secret provincial meeting of teachers.

My first impression of Ri Kwang was that he appeared intelligent and magnanimous, but reticent. In the course of repeated contacts thereafter I learned that he was indeed a young man of exceptional sensitivity, with a kind heart and the ability to form strong friendships.

My comrades were charmed when they met Ri Kwang, and they tried to persuade him to settle in Jilin, even suggesting to him that the Wenguang Middle School would be good for developing his knowledge, that the Law College would give him an ideal start in life, and that the Yuwen Middle School would be best for a man

who wished to become a revolutionary.

Ri Kwang himself did not wish to leave Jilin. He said that, in his primary school days at Guchengzi, Yanji County, he had visited Jilin several times on errands for leaders of the Independence Army, that the life of the young people and students had now changed beyond recognition, and that the city was now buzzing with the social campaigns organized by students, whereas in previous years the young people had been so lethargic that their campaign had gone almost unnoticed. So Ri Kwang stayed and attended Middle School No. 5 in Jilin for some time.

In his early days Ri Kwang had been influenced mostly by the Korean Independence Army leaders, such as Hong Pom Do, Kim Jwa Jin, Hwang Pyong Gil and Choe Myong Rok. The headquarters of an Independence Army unit had been billeted on his wife's parents' house at Guchengzi for a long time, so he had met many leaders of the nationalist movement. Ri Kwang was sharp-eyed, quick-witted and modest and he attracted the attention of the Independence Army leaders. They seemed to have tried to make him heir to the cause of the Independence Army, just as O Tong Jin and Ri Ung had tried to make me their successor.

During his boyhood Ri Kwang had learned Chinese characters at the village school which was run by his mother's father. As his father's health was poor, he had given up the idea of going to secondary school, and at the age of 14, he began to help his father support the family. At the tender age of 16 he began to manage the household affairs as effective head of the family, and his modern

schooling was therefore delayed. After graduating from school he taught at primary schools in Yanji and Wangqing for some time.

Until that time he had been known by his real name Ri Myong Chun. But from the time he started teaching at Beihamatang in Chunhua Sub-county he was known by the nickname Ri Kwang. In those days eight schools at Beihamatang and its neighbourhood used to hold joint debating contests and athletic meets as part of the enlightenment movement, and Ri Kwang who was working underground, used to compete for the football team of Hamatang, using his nickname. From that time onwards everybody called him Ri Kwang.

"It was the Independence Army that guided me to nationalism and it was the independence movement that led me to communism," he said to me when we first met, recollecting the days in Guchengzi.

His words sounded very strange to me.

"How could that be, did the old men of the Independence Army teach you two thoughts at a time?"

"No, I wasn't exactly taught. How can I explain? I should really say that they influenced me, and there were both nationalist and Marxist-Leninist influences."

"The old men must have been double-dealers?"

"I would say they were seeking a shift of direction, rather than double-dealing. While leading the Independence Army movement, they read communist books in secret. When I visited the house of my wife's parents, I saw in a corner of a room lots of the books the old

men were reading. So I began to read them, too, to kill time–but now I simply enjoy reading them."

I squeezed Ri Kwang's hand, and said. "I am glad to meet a man who espouses communism."

Ri Kwang waved his hand in a hasty gesture, saying:

"No. I am not yet a communist. There are quite a few concepts I cannot understand among the communist principles advanced by Marx and Lenin. To my simple eyes, the communist ideal appears somehow too fantastic. You may feel sorry to hear this, Comrade Song Ju, but I hope you will understand that I am speaking frankly."

I liked his candidness during our first conversation. It was this, more than anything else, which attracted me to him.

At the time Ri Kwang was neither a nationalist nor a communist. In short, he was in the process of changing his direction. In the course of his association with us in Jilin he became a communist, but he did not join the Young Communist League or Anti-Imperialist Youth League which we had organized.

An informed source states that when he was coming to Jilin, Ri Kwang mortgaged some of his school's ten hectares or so of land for 400 *yuan* for travel expenses, but I am not sure this story is authentic. The school lands had been allocated by the state for the running of educational institutions. So if it is true that he took the risk of mortgaging such public property, he must have been very ambitious.

In a letter to his brother-in-law which he sent after he left home,

he is said to have expressed the following grim resolve:

"I think I must find a true patriot even if I have to comb the whole of Manchuria and the Korean peninsula. It may take me ten years or twenty years to do this. However, I pledge myself not to return to my paternal home until I succeed."

His determination gives us a glimpse of his character, and explains why he left his home and travelled round all the major cities and political centres of Manchuria.

Ri Kwang was honest, meticulous and resourceful. He spoke Chinese as fluently as a northeastern Chinese. Therefore, he was competent to perform the job of a headman of ten households, a hundred households, or even of a sub-county in the later days.

It was from him that I, who come from a northwestern province of Korea, learned the customs of Jiandao and Hamgyong Province.

While in Jilin, for some unknown reasons Ri Kwang did not wish to join us in the organizational life. He was probably in the mood of a traveller who was only stopping over at Jilin. However, he frequently kept company with me. Later, through me, he became a close friend of my mother.

He met my mother when he was returning to Jiandao after studying in Jilin. Before his departure he came to see me and as he took his farewell, he casually said:

"Song Ju, when I return to Jiandao I wish to drop in at Fusong to see your mother. Do you mind?"

"No. It isn't like you, Ri Kwang, to ask about such a thing. If you want to see her, you should go to see her. Why should you

need my permission?" I was grateful to him for his suggestion.

"So you agree. Good! I will see your mother as I have decided to. Everyone follows your mother's lead and calls her 'our mother,' but I haven't even made a courtesy call on her. How impolite I have been! Why should she be mother only to Kim Hyok and Kye Yong Chun, and not to me?"

"Thank you, Ri Kwang! Now my mother will have another son. From today we are brothers."

"Then, we should drink a toast together, or at least make a visit to the noodle shop together, shouldn't we?"

Needless to say, we did both.

He paid a visit to my mother at Fusong, spending a few days in her company, before going to Wangqing. In those days his family was living in Wangqing County, not at Yilangou in Yanji County.

After Ri Kwang left Fusong, mother sent me a letter, telling me a lot about him. The letter said:

"Song Ju, Ri Kwang left today for Jiandao. I saw him off at the ferry on the River Songhua. I feel so lonely, just as I did when I said goodbye to you, that I don't feel like working today. He is so affable! Strange to say, I feel as if he were one of my own sons. He himself said that he felt as if I were his own mother. My heart overflows as I think of taking more and more sturdy boys under my wing as the days pass by. Can there be any greater pleasure than this in the world? You have introduced a really fine boy to me. He took Chol Ju with him to Yangdicun, paid obeisance at father's grave and cropped the weeds on the mound. Many of your

friends have been to my home, and I know many young men, but this is the first time I have met such a lovable boy as Ri Kwang. I hope your friendship will thrive like the green pines on the southern hill.”

On the day I received the letter I walked in buoyant mood on the bank of the River Songhua all day long. The joy my mother expressed in every line of the letter affected me greatly. If she was happy, I was happy; and if she was satisfied, I was satisfied. If meeting Ri Kwang gave her such great satisfaction, I was equally delighted.

After Ri Kwang left Jilin, I received a money order from the post office.

Many people assisted me financially while I attended the Yuwen Middle School in Jilin, as I have mentioned on various occasions. Those who gave me money for my school expenses were mostly my father’s friends such as O Tong Jin, Son Jong Do, Ryang Se Bong, Jang Chol Ho and Hyon Muk Gwan, who lived in Jilin or came frequently to report to the headquarters of the Jongui-bu from the bases of the Independence Army, for instance, from Liuhe, Xingjing, Fusong and Huadian.

My patrons in my Jilin days included members of the Young Communist League and the Ryugil Association of Korean Students in Jilin. Sin Yong Gun, who was working as an activist of the Young Communist League while attending the Wenguang Middle School, also contributed to my school expenses, though he was far from rich.

As I have already mentioned, in those days my mother earned only five to ten *fen* a day by taking, in sewing. If she earned ten *fen* a day on average, her monthly earning was three *yuan*, which was just enough to pay my monthly school fees at the Yuwen Middle School.

She did not send me the school expenses by post, in order to save the cost of postage. She used to save her daily earnings until she had enough for the monthly school fees and then send them with someone she knew travelling to Jilin. This saved me the trouble of calling at the post office.

I used to accept the money from my mother with mixed feelings. There was a feeling of relief at not having to worry about being disgraced by failing to pay my school fees; but there was also a feeling of concern for my family, who would have to get by without any money.

In fact, three *yuan* was a trifling amount, scarcely enough for a rich man's son to buy himself lunch. Most of the students at the Yuwen Middle School came from rich families. Sometimes scores of money orders, which we called "slips," would arrive for the rich men's sons at school in a single day. On these occasions the children of poor people like myself, who scarcely knew what a money order looked like, went about in low spirits.

In this context, the arrival of ten *yuan* for me, one of the poor students, was a great event.

As I took the money order to the post office, I tried to guess who might have sent it.

But I could not think of any relations or acquaintances who could send me so much money at one time. The only person who might send money to me at Jilin was my mother, but it would be impossible for her to send so much. I thought the money might have come to the wrong person because of a mistake by the clerk at the post office, but such a mistake seemed very unlikely.

If a person who received a money order could not name the sender at the post office, the clerk could refuse to pay. On that day, however, the clerk paid without even asking me the sender's name. Instead, I asked the clerk who had sent the order. "It is from Ri Kwang!" the voice behind the partition replied. I was surprised: I had many closer friends than Ri Kwang, even though we had become close friends by the time he left Jilin. I had never imagined that he would send me money.

I was deeply moved by his generosity.

While he was in Wangqing, Ri Kwang frequently visited my home, bringing many packages of medicine and money for my mother who was living at Xinglongcun, Antu County. The money was his monthly savings from his wages as the headman of a hundred households. He was extremely kind-hearted and charitable to the needy.

He used to stay at my mother's for several days, helping her around the house, and then returning to Wangqing. He became a welcome regular visitor to my family.

Whenever I received financial support I regretted my inability to return the kindness. My family was too poor to pay the money

back. I resolved to repay my friends and colleagues by becoming a loyal son of the country and a faithful servant of my fellow people.

In the winter of 1929, Ri Kwang took a train from Dunhua to Jilin in order to visit me. I was in prison at the time. He had timed his journey badly.

Instead of meeting me, he made the acquaintance of Kong Suk Ja, a waitress at the inn where he was lodging, and from her he learned the details of the youth and student movement in Jilin, including the way in which the leaders were guiding the movement. While assuming the guise of a waitress, Kong Suk Ja, on assignment from the Young Communist League, maintained a liaison between us and the young men who came to Jilin to visit us. She later became Ri Kwang's second wife as a result of their acquaintance at the inn. His first wife, Kim Orinnyo, died of illness.

Ri Kwang was determined not to marry again, so deep was his grief over his wife's death. He believed that no woman would make a better wife than her because they had been devoted to each other. Within a year of her death, many women had offered him their hands, but he would not even glance at them.

Whenever we met him, his friends and I tried to persuade Ri Kwang to get married, at least for the sake of his infirm parents and his little son. Dissuading him from his resolution proved more difficult than pressing resin from dry wood. It was only after three years of mourning for Kim Orinnyo that he accepted my advice. His second wife Kong Suk Ja was good-natured, wise and

virtuous. She raised the orphaned child with such great care that she won everyone's admiration. The child, too, regarded her as his own mother. Unfortunately, Kong Suk Ja had no children of her own.

Although he could not meet me when I was in prison, with the help of Kong Suk Ja Ri Kwang made close friends with young people attending the Yuwen Middle School and the Normal School in Jilin who were committed to the movement. The Jilin organization convinced Ri Kwang that all the patriotic forces must first be united in the cause of national independence, and that in order to unite the patriotic forces there must be an idea and a line which would serve as their common banner, as well as a centre of unity and cohesion. He returned to Jiandao convinced of this.

Ri Kwang's stay in Jilin was a turning-point in his revolutionary activity. As a result he was put under surveillance by the secret agents of the Japanese consulate and the Manchurian police, but he was never afraid of them and continued courageously along his new course of action.

The autumn and spring struggles were important events which proved the correctness of the lessons he had learned in Jilin. His world-view made a leap to still greater heights as a result of these struggles.

After he moved to Wangqing, Ri Kwang worked as the sub-county head at Beihamatang. The fact that a man who had declared his commitment to the great cause of revolution and regarded it as his exclusive ideal, was appointed as an official at the lowest rung

of the enemy's administrative hierarchy was an event worthy of considerable interest.

I met Ri Kwang again at Mingyuegou in December 1931.

At that time he was occupied with providing bed and board for the representatives to the meeting at Mingyuegou that winter. When I saw him appear at the meeting place with a knapsack full of foxtail millet and with five pheasants hanging over his shoulders, I was moved to admiration, and thought that he was a man worthy of his name.

The starch noodles, a speciality of Jiandao, with a sauce of minced pheasant and chicken were so delicious that we could not resist the temptation of asking for a second helping.

After Ri Kwang and I each ate two bowls of noodles at the same table, we lay in the front room of Ri Chong San's house with wooden pillows under our heads, talking through the night.

First of all, I thanked him heartily for helping my mother in her household affairs and also for sending me money for my school expenses.

"While I was eating the noodles tonight, I thought a lot. The efforts you put into preparing the meat sauce moved me to tears. While I was studying in Jilin you often took me to restaurants. I don't know how I can repay your kindness...."

When he heard me say this, he tapped me on my shoulder.

"Don't mention it. I have helped your family out of my desire to contribute to the independence movement to which your father dedicated his whole life. How hard you have been working

directing the youth and student movement! It's only natural to contribute a little money to such a patriotic family as yours.... Don't mention it again."

He pretended to be angry, and gestured threateningly at me with his hand.

This made me keenly aware of another aspect of his beautiful character.

"Ri Kwang, don't be too modest. Kindness should be repaid. I must thank you again, and also on my mother's behalf. Frankly, I had no idea you would give us such wholehearted support."

"I didn't suppose you would. But Song Ju, I have my reasons for doing it."

"What are your reasons?"

"One day your mother told me how she was married to your father, as if it were an old folk tale. She said that arranging the marriage had been by no means easy."

"I know that. My two brothers and I heard about it from my mother after her husband passed away. It was a really tearful story."

This story takes us back to the years before the "annexation of Korea by Japan." A distance of about two miles lay between my mother's home at Chilgol and father's home at Namri, with a low hill standing between the two villages. Travellers from Namri to Pyongyang had to go by way of Chilgol. And those from Chilgol to Nampho had to pass by Namri. The people of the two villages were on good terms and visited each other frequently. This led to

many of them being related by marriage.

My maternal grandfather was looking for a suitable person for a son-in-law from Namri and the first young man that attracted the old man's interest was none other than my father. When a matchmaker had begun to come and go between the two houses, mother's father came first to my father's house at Namri to see him. However, he returned to Chilgol undecided, because the young man's family was living in dire poverty, although he thought the young man himself was acceptable. If his daughter was married to such a poor family she would have to suffer hardship all her life, the old man thought. But even after that he visited my father as many as five times.

My father's family, being destitute, were not able to serve a proper lunch to this person who might become an in-law, on any of his six visits.

Only after the sixth visit did my mother's father consult with his wife and send a letter agreeing to the engagement.

"Song Ju, this story has given me a better understanding of your family. You will be surprised if I tell you that I knew of the crab incident, won't you?"

I was, indeed, surprised to hear Ri Kwang mention the crab affair. This was an old family event of which only a few members including mother, grandfather Po Hyon, and I myself knew.

"Oh! How do you know about that?"

"Surely you can guess how close I have become with your family members, can't you?" Ri Kwang pretended to be elated at

seeing me so surprised.

At the age of six or seven, during the childhood days I spent at Mangyongdae, I began catching crabs. My grandfather used to catch a lot of crabs to eke out a poor living. The Sunhwa River, a tributary of the Taedong River, was teeming with crabs, and whenever he went catching crabs, grandfather always took me with him. Perhaps he wanted to teach me the skills needed to eke out a living from childhood. Although they were despised by rich people, to us these crabs were delicious when they were salted.

Crab catching was a quite simple and monotonous task. You just needed to lower well-boiled ears of sorghum into the water and then pull them out some time later; we found clusters of crabs clinging to the ears. We used to catch scores or hundreds of them a day, and no words could tell how happy we were as we returned home carrying the catch in mesh bags.

The crabs improved our meals a lot. Whenever we had a guest, my grandmother would take salted crabs out of a jar to serve the visitor. On such occasions I used to think how good it would be if we could serve them to my mother's parents. For me my mother's maiden home in Chilgol was a mysterious world, a focus of infinite love and sympathy. I liked the homely smell of the boiled cattle fodder steaming in the stable, and I loved to hear the twittering of the birds on the branches of the jujube trees in the garden. I also was fascinated by the old tales that were told on the straw mats, as I sniffed at the scented smoke of the moxa, burning to keep away mosquitoes on summer nights.

My mother's sister would tell me not to forget Chilgol because I was born there. Perhaps my mother spent some time at her maiden home before she gave birth to me. But my grandparents always said that my birthplace was Namri. They said that my mother stayed for several days at her parents' home at about the time I was born, but that was no reason for me to be known as a boy from Chilgol. A woman might give birth to a baby away from home, they said, but according to ancestral law the home of the child's father should be considered to be its birthplace.

In any case, I liked my mother's maiden home as much as my father's home, and I felt this very strongly when I was catching crabs.

When I was studying at the Changdok School at Chilgol, I would return to Mangyongdae on Sundays to go crab catching with my grandfather. One day I hid half of the catch in a nearby bush before I showed the mesh bag to grandfather. He was saddened by the small catch, but I pretended not to hear his expressions of regret.

Of course, I should have told him the truth, that I had put aside half the catch for my mother's side of the family. But I was not sure whether he would like it or not, so I hesitated. After I took the mesh bag home for him, I went to the Sunhwa River again and took the other half of the catch to Chilgol. My maternal relations were glad to see the crabs, and thanked me for the present. I told them that thanks were due to grandpa Po Hyon, who had caught the crabs.

One day my maternal grandfather came to Mangyongdae and thanked grandpa Po Hyon for the crabs, which he said were delicious.

At first grandpa Po Hyon was embarrassed by the unexpected thanks, but when he heard the whole truth he was pleased.

Later he praised me for being a very considerate boy.

This was the incident mentioned by Ri Kwang, an anecdote of poverty and a drama of kindness.

However, Ri Kwang seemed to have interpreted this story in a different light, not as an act of kindness.

"After I heard the stories of the marriage and the crabs, I began to feel sympathy for your family," Ri Kwang said.

I was deeply moved by his consideration.

"Ri Kwang, how do you like the job of sub-county head?"

I had wanted to know this ever since I had come to central Manchuria. A report from the political workers in the Jiandao area, whom I had sent to east Manchuria, said that Ri Kwang, in whom I was most interested, had been working as a sub-county head in Wangqing.

He smiled at my question.

"It is irksome, but I've done quite well at it. Last autumn some of our comrades were held in custody at Hamatang by the defence corps, but they were released when I gave them a reference. The authority of a sub-county head seems to have been effective."

He said jokingly that if he were allowed, he would like to be a sub-county head all his life.

I talked proudly about my home village, and Ri Kwang joked.

"If Mangyongdae is such a beautiful place, I will follow you there with my family after the country becomes independent."

"Not to Jongsong? I heard that you come from Jongsong."

"I can make myself at home anywhere so long as I feel attached to a place, even though I was not born there. Anyway, if I do go there, please help me to find a place where I can teach primary schoolchildren. You'll be a schoolmaster and I will work under you as a teacher."

"Oh, my! I hate teaching at primary school...."

"Oh, really! I heard that you taught at Antu or Guyushu. And your father was a teacher for many years, I heard."

Our friendship grew deeper when we were organizing the special detachment.

Immediately after he organized a special detachment at Wangqing on our advice, Ri Kwang came to Xiaoshahe to see me. The hostile activities of the national salvation army against Korean communists and young patriots were a great obstacle to the efforts of our comrades in Wangqing to prepare for the founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Even after he had organized a special detachment, Ri Kwang was still left in suspense, unable to decide the future direction of his activities.

At that time I told him about my views on matters of principle and the means of forming a united front with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units, and I discussed about the goals and methods of the special detachment's activities with him in detail.

He accepted my proposals with an open mind.

Foxtail millet mixed with sorghum, bean paste soup, and dry wild vegetables were the only food that my mother could afford at that period, but she still accorded him cordial hospitality. And he respected my mother greatly, too. Mother's warm love moved him and his youthful enthusiasm and his simple and honest mind were a comfort to my mother.

It was while Ri Kwang was staying at Xinglongcun that we founded the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Though she was ill, my mother came with Chol Ju to see the guerrilla army. Stroking the rifle which Ri Kwang was shouldering, she said; "With these weapons you can fight in real earnest now. How can the Independence Army fight the Japanese with outmoded weapons? Now as I see your army and the weapons on your shoulders, I feel as if my life-long grievances had been resolved. How glad your mothers would be to see you as you are now! Mothers' hearts are broken and they weep if their sons act like fools or behave badly, but they would be delighted and moved to tears if they could see their sturdy sons under arms ready to fight for their country."

Back at Wangqing, Ri Kwang worked hard with the national salvation army.

Our success in achieving cooperation with Commander Yu at Antu provided valuable experience in work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units. At first this work went comparatively smoothly and successfully.

Many of these anti-Japanese units were enthusiastic about forming an anti-imperialist united front with us.

We communists took the initiative in forming the united front.

However, the Leftist elements obstructed this work. Their adventurist motto "Down with the upper stratum and win over the rank and file!" was a provocation to the higher echelons of the anti-Japanese units, leading to bitter resistance and resentment, and many of the commanders of these units began to take measures against the communists, repressing or even killing them.

It was something to be wholeheartedly welcomed in this situation that Ri Kwang started working among the anti-Japanese units.

In order to work with these units, Ri Kwang moved from Beihamatang to Taipinggou.

In those days I often visited his house at Taipinggou. The village of Taipingcun, with about three hundred peasant households, was located at the geographical centre of a delta connecting Xiaowangqing, Yaoyinggou, and Laoheishan. It was not far from the Soviet-Manchurian border. From this village it was about six miles to Luozigou. All of the major assembly areas of the national salvation army units were located near Taipinggou. Ri Kwang's special detachment was at Jianchanggou, a little more than one mile from the town of Luozigou.

His house was perched on the sloping river-bank, isolated from the village of Taipinggou. There was an imposing well with a large water dipper by the house, which was known as the house with a

dipper. I drank from this well on several occasions. When we appeared in front of the house on hot summer days, streaming with sweat, Ri Kwang used to fetch a bucketful of cool water from the well and offer the water to me. The water was most refreshing.

Whenever I went to Luozigou, I used to drop in at Taipinggou to inquire after his parents. At this house, together with Chinese communists such as Zhou Bao-zhong, Chen Han-zhang, Hu Jin-min and Wang Run-cheng, we held the last meeting of the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee which discussed the question of a united front with the national salvation army.

In the battle in defence of Xiaowangqing and many other large and small battles, Ri Kwang demonstrated distinct ability and capacity as a commander. The practical example he set influenced the soldiers of the national salvation army, and he became renowned as a military and political worker among the broad masses of east Manchuria.

Wu Yi-cheng, who regarded Ri Kwang's special detachment as a genuinely anti-Manchukuo and anti-Japanese armed force, appointed him commanding officer of the security squad under the forward headquarters of the national salvation army, and even gave him bodyguards.

After that Ri Kwang established contact with Tong Shan-hao in order to develop further cooperation with the national salvation army against the Japanese.

Though he had taken up arms to fight the Japanese, Tong Shan-hao had degenerated into a bandit. In those days, many people

identified the bandits with the mounted rebels as, indeed, they still do.

There had been many mounted rebels in Manchuria. When a large number of people of the Han nationality flowed into Manchuria through Shanhaiguan from China proper in the closing years of the Qing dynasty, the Manchurian people began arming in self-defence to protect their farmland and their ancestral heritage from the plundering immigrants. This was the origin of Manchuria's righteous rebels, whom the Japanese called mounted rebels.

Unlike the scattered bands of sordid highwaymen, the mounted rebels regarded themselves as just soldiers, acting in accordance with their own code of conduct and refraining from plundering people's property. The mounted rebels' society was an insurgent society, far removed from the central political authorities.

The life of the mounted rebels was inconceivable without arms. They had lived by carrying arms for a long time, and such a life inspired feelings of envy and admiration. The people in Manchuria would say openly, "Going on the streets is for women and rebelling against the authorities is for men."

Naturally, the rebels did not always in fact abide by their own strict code of conduct. Many mounted rebels degenerated into bandits in the course of their outlaw existence. There were many groups of mounted troops, which were difficult to identify as either righteous rebels or mere bandits. Many bandits behaved as if they were righteous rebels. Groups of bandits in the guise of righteous

rebels accepted political bribes from imperialist aggressors and warlords, murdering people and committing atrocities beyond all imagination.

When many commanders of the national salvation army became indignant and hostile to the communists because the Leftist tactics of “down with the upper stratum” were applied in work with Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units, the strategists of Japanese imperialism understood this fact very quickly and used it to sow discord among the anti-Japanese forces. They were skilled in the notorious method of getting the anti-Japanese forces to fight among themselves, sniping at and destroying each other.

The Japanese imperialists employed this method when they urged Tong Shan-hao to massacre all the members of Ri Kwang’s special detachment.

At first, they tried to get him to surrender. They put up notices everywhere stating that the person who captured Ri Kwang would be rewarded with lots of money, and that if Ri Kwang himself surrendered he would receive an important appointment. In their judgement, in order to disband Wu Yi-cheng’s army it was imperative to check the influence of the communists on it, and Ri Kwang was the man who wielded that influence. Ri Kwang’s special detachment was regarded as a united-front shock force operating in the heart of the national salvation army. Thus the Japanese intelligence service was aware of his true significance and role.

Tong Shan-hao, the worst of the bandits, was politically an

obtuse, brutal and capricious man, and was easily bribed by the Japanese strategists. Knowing the views Ri Kwang supported, he baited a trap by proposing negotiations for a joint operation at Laoheishan, in accordance with a script prepared by the Japanese imperialists.

Ri Kwang made the mistake of taking the bait. Not knowing that Tong Shan-hao had become a running dog of Japanese imperialism, he set out for Laoheishan with more than ten members of his special detachment, including Wang Cheng-fu, the chief secretary of the forward headquarters of the national salvation army. The party organization warned him against the danger of dealing with a blind and brutal bandit commander. Ri Kwang, however, insisted on going to negotiate, even at the risk of his life, saying that if the line of the anti-imperialist united front was not implemented, it would be impossible for the revolution to advance any further.

Tong Shan-hao held a banquet for Ri Kwang's party and then massacred all of them except one, who narrowly escaped death. When the bandits fled, they left him at the site of the massacre, thinking he was dead like the others. When we got there we saved him. But he, too, died in battle later, in the woods between Luozigou and Laoheishan.

Ri Kwang was killed at the age of twenty-eight in a mountain hut near Laoheishan. His error was lack of vigilance. In order to form a united front with Tong Shan-hao, he needed to transform him ideologically. But he tried to effect a united front merely by

making friends with him.

I grieved over his death.

I was on fire with the desire to take immediate revenge on the Tong Shan-hao clique. Had it not been for the voice of reason which told me that organizing a common front with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units was the duty of the communists at that time, their primary task and general strategy, I would have given way to the impulse and plunged into a bloody battle of vengeance.

The whole of east Manchuria condemned the nefarious crime committed by Tong Shan-hao, and cried out for justice to be done. Leftist hooligans complained that the army did not retaliate against the class enemy who had murdered Ri Kwang. Some people claimed that it was a Rightist deviation not to strike against Tong Shan-hao.

Ri Kwang's death was an irretrievable loss to the communist effort for an anti-imperialist common front. We lost a precious comrade worth more than a thousand enemy soldiers. The enemy had taken away from me yet another prop and mainstay of the Korean revolution.

I felt as if my own flesh had been torn away. I bit my lips to suppress my cries, I was obsessed by my thoughts. In the year since we started the war against Japanese, how many comrades-in-arms had already been taken from my side! Why had my friends departed one after another, never to return, as soon as we became attached to each other? Was this the work of destiny?

As I strode with clenched fists, up and down the bank of the River Xiaowangqing, where Ri Kwang and I had discussed the strategy of the great anti-Japanese war, I cursed again and again the cruel fate that had driven me into this abyss of grief. Then I came to a decision:

Ri Kwang's death must not be pointless. If I succeeded in establishing the united front with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units to which he devoted such great efforts and so much energy, then he too would be delighted, though in his grave.

Ri Kwang's death drove me to speed up the negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng. It did not make me flinch from the path to the united front, but urged me on along it.

I had to visit Wu Yi-cheng! If I could succeed in negotiations with him, I would be able to avenge Ri Kwang's death.

With this in mind, I speeded up the daylight march to Luozigou. I dropped in at Taipingcun to console Ri Kwang's bereaved family. His wife Kong Suk Ja spread her arms wide to stop me.

"General, you must not go there. It is not the place you should go to. My husband went there and.... General, please don't go there for God's sake."

But strangely enough, her tearful warning only urged me on to complete the daylight march.

The woman's shoulders heaved up and down as she held a seven-.or eight-year old boy in her arms, and wiped the tears from her eyes.

The boy in her arms was Ri Po Chon, Ri Kwang's own son. The

boy also stared at me with his eyes brimming over with tears. Whenever I went there, Ri Po Chon, who would be playing on the porch, used to call out to me “Uncle Song Ju!” and come out of the gate. One day he pestered me with a request to make a grasshopper for him.

When I saw Po Chon run out to the road led by her mother, I regretted that I had not done this for him. How good it would have been now if he had clung to me, asking for the grasshopper as he had before!

How much happier I would feel even if the boy had not dared to ask, but simply climbed up on my shoulders like the innocent child of former days, who used to call me “Uncle” and beg me to let him ride on my shoulders!

But Po Chon was weeping silent bitter tears. Ri Po Chon at my side was not a friendly, cheerful and mischievous boy, but a downcast and fearful child suffering great distress, a person who had bid farewell to his boyhood and its rainbow illusions. His father’s death had destroyed the boy’s world of playful fancy in which his greatest desire was for a grasshopper. In this way, Po Chon lost both his parents before he was ten years old.

Po Chon would never again ask me for the grasshopper. His tender soul was grieving over the tragic death of his father.

I gazed into his face helplessly.

The words were on the tip of my tongue: “Po Chon, good-bye! I will return soon when I take vengeance for your father on his enemy.”

Instead, I said, “Po Chon, I’m thirsty. Whenever I came here your father used to bring me a bowl of cold water, but today you can do it for your father, can’t you?”

At that moment, his dreamy eyes suddenly became animated and he darted off like the wind, reappearing just as swiftly with a brass bowlful of water from the well with the large dipper. This small event seemed to transform his mental state.

The rippling water in the brass bowl revived Ri Kwang’s image in my mind. The intermingled images of the boy and his father reflected on the surface of the water moved me to tears.

Mentally thanking the boy I gulped the water until the bowl was dry.

Po Chon wiped his nose and glanced at me lovingly as he held the bowl in his hand.

I felt a little light-hearted as I ordered my men to resume the march. Just as I was about to take my leave, Po Chon darted towards his house.

I wondered where he was going.

He ran back quickly, and held out a handful of oats to my white horse. This silent gesture released the tears that I had been holding back.

Po Chon stood there on the riverside as we crossed the river and moved far away. When I turned my head as I sat on the saddle all I could see was a flickering white dot.

“Po Chon, you must grow up to be a revolutionary like your father!”

I held my hand up in salute from afar, wishing him a bright future. Later, when the guerrilla zones were dissolved and the second expedition to north Manchuria was begun, I stayed at Ri Kwang's house for about one week and discussed Po Chon's future with Kong Suk Ja.

Po Chon grew up into a revolutionary as I had wished. When he was working at Linkou as a railway worker, he attacked a Japanese military train, but he was captured and served a two-year prison sentence. This was all before he was twenty years old.

With the liberation of the country in 1945 he was released and travelled to the land of his forefathers via Dandong in the autumn of the same year, craving to see his native land and sky and water. He travelled as far as Pyongyang and Seoul, and then returned to Linkou. That journey left vivid impressions on the mind of Ri Po Chon, a sensitive twenty-year old with a bright future.

Feeling an irresistible desire to devote himself heart and soul to the construction of the country of his father's friends, he crossed the railway bridge over the Amnok River with reluctance. In the motherland there was the new world of which his father had dreamed, the promised land which he himself had longed for since his boyhood.

But this promised land was engulfed in the flames of war five years later, as the young Republic fought a decisive battle for survival.

At the news of the war that was raging far away, Ri Po Chon, now a company commander of the Chinese People's Liberation

Army, volunteered for action and joined the Korean People's Army on the Korean front. To our great sorrow he fell in battle in the autumn of 1950 while fighting as a commanding officer in a mechanized army division.

Later, in the 1970s, Kim Jong Il, Secretary in Charge of Organizational Affairs, who took a particular interest in Ri Kwang's fiery career and his revolutionary activity, instructed film workers to produce a film entitled *In the First Armed Unit*, based on Ri Kwang's life. Since then Ri Kwang's name has been known to the entire country.

Kong Suk Ja, Ri Kwang's wife, died while fighting as a member of the sewing unit in the guerrilla army.

Ri Ju Phyong, Ri Kwang's father, who worked in support of the revolutionary army with an enthusiasm fuelled by grief over the death of his son, and Ri Pong Ju, Ri Kwang's elder sister, died of illness induced by enemy torture.

We must be grateful that Ri Po Chon left his son with us before his death. The son is advancing stoutly along the path that was pioneered by his grandfather's generation and transformed into a broad highway by his father's generation.

Ri Kwang's family has thus been serving in the revolutionary army for three generations. For a family to have fought under arms for three generations is just cause for noble pride. We must admire Ri Kwang's grandson for choosing to wear military uniform as heir to his grandfather and father, instead of working in other fields.

When this young officer, whose face, bearing and gait so resembled his grandfather's, first appeared before my eyes, together with his mother, I felt a lump rise in my throat, for it seemed as though Ri Kwang, who left our side 60 years ago had returned to visit me.

Ri Po Chon's wife, who lost her husband at the age of 25, has brought up her son, trusting for more than 40 years that he would be a stalwart heir to Ri Kwang's cause and his revolutionary spirit. Her devotion merits everyone's highest commendation.

At his meeting with me Ri Po Chon's son said that he was resolved to dedicate himself and his son and daughters to me and Marshal Kim Jong Il, that they would serve with loyal devotion in military uniform. I know very well that this will not prove to be empty words. Ri Kwang's family does not use words idly.

What great work Ri Kwang would have done if he had returned alive to the liberated motherland!

Even now I occasionally ponder on this. Ri Kwang's social activity began, of course, with teaching and at Ri Chong San's house, at the time of the Mingyuegou meeting that winter, he also expressed an ambition to become a teacher.

But I think that if he had survived, to return to the liberated homeland in triumph, he would have become a soldier like Kang Kon and Choe Hyon. He was a devoted communist who always chose a difficult job.

2. Negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng

One of the most serious and pressing problems we faced in our activities after we moved to Wangqing was sharp confrontation with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese armed forces. In the year 1933, the Japanese imperialists' persistent machinations, intended to sow dissent, the frequent vacillations on the part of the leaders of the Chinese nationalist armed forces, and the harmful effects of the Leftist Soviet line, brought the relations between the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and the national salvation army again to the brink of armed conflict.

I have mentioned before that the communists of Korea and China invested great efforts in the work with the Chinese nationalist units in Manchuria after the September 18 incident.

Thanks to these efforts the Wangqing guerrilla unit was able to maintain intimate relations with those Chinese nationalist units in the early days. To cite an admirable example, on one side, two armed units–the AJPGA and the self-defence corps–and, on the other side, Commander Guan's battalion concerted their efforts to repulse an attack by Japanese garrison troops at Tokgol in the

spring of 1932.

At that time the Japanese garrison troops in Daduchuan had moved scores of carts towards Tokgol in order to transport timber that had been cut during the reign of the Kuomintang. There were large stockpiles of timber in the valleys of Dawangqing and Xiaowangqing. That day our forces lured the enemy into an ambush, killing most of the force of 40 to 50 garrison troops and capturing many weapons.

The battle at Tokgol marked a turning-point in the work to improve the image of the communists in Wangqing, where anti-communist feelings were deep-rooted, and in the development of relations with the NSA from hostility to cooperation. The battle paved the way for the Korean communists to infiltrate into the NSA. After the battle Kim Un Sik, Hong Hae Il, Won Hong Gwon, Jang Ryong Sam, Kim Ha Il and others joined Guan's unit.

Kim Ha Il, a crackshot, was appointed communications officer and Kim Un Sik, a man of knowledge, was appointed chief of staff soon after that.

As they had done in the past the people of Macun washed the clothes of the men and officers of Guan's unit after the battle, and sent them toothbrushes, tooth powder, soap, towels and tobacco pouches as gifts; moreover, they frequently organized artistic performances by Children's Corps members. The Young Communist League members conducted political work among them with propaganda leaflets.

In general, the NSA soldiers seldom called the communists

“*tongzhi* ” (comrade); however, the officers and men of Guan’s unit always called our guerrillas “*tongzhi* ” whenever they met them.

The guerrillas who joined Guan’s unit were all qualified at least for district party committee members, so they were efficient in working among the officers and men of the NSA unit. Battalion Commander Guan was charmed by the communists’ personalities and qualifications. Winning him over was an event of great significance for the improvement of relations with the other units of the NSA.

The anti-Japanese guerrilla unit in the Hunchun area exchanged information with the NSA units, and they cooperated even in the struggle against the enemy’s lackeys. The guerrillas in Yantonglazi armed themselves with weapons provided by a NSA unit.

The prevailing situation favoured the communists: this turning-point meant that they could establish a united front with the NSA if they worked harder.

However, the “Kim Myong San incident” provoked by the Leftist adventurists had nullified the friendly relations with Chinese nationalist units which had been established with so much effort. This incident resulted in Battalion Commander Guan’s surrender to the Japanese imperialists and in other NSA units breaking with the communists. At about the same time the guerrilla unit led by Choe Hyon opened fire with a machinegun on the soldiers of a Chinese nationalist unit in Yanji County as they defected to the enemy; this incident further complicated relations

with the NSA.

In its early days the Wangqing guerrilla unit made quite a few mistakes in its relations with the NSA. Swayed by his desire to obtain a few rifles, Ryang Song Ryong, who was in charge of the battalion, did not implement the line of the united front to the letter. He had a fine personality and was a competent officer who commanded skilfully in battle, but his ingrained military routinism and adventurism led him to slight the united front. We criticized him severely for this.

Only Kaoshan unit, which had been under our constant influence, did not follow the example of Battalion Commander Guan; this unit maintained a lasting alliance with our anti-Japanese guerrilla army. On the *Tano* day or the fifth day of the fifth lunar month of 1933 the unit, in cooperation with the self-defence corps in Jattogi (the present Taipingcun) which was led by Pak Tu Song, repelled an attack of the 300-strong Japanese garrison troops and the puppet Manchukuo army, when they invaded Shiliping via Dongnancha from their base in the Dongning county town. Many of the invading troops were killed.

The NSA units neglected long-range observation, posting sentries only directly in front of their headquarters; so the Anti-Japanese Self-Defence Corps maintained long-range observation posts for Kaoshan unit. When he had to send important, urgent messages to other Chinese units, Kaoshan would often ask the paramilitary organizations in Shiliping for help. The members of the Children's Vanguard were extremely responsible in the way

they transmitted these messages for him.

However, this friendly relationship did not extend to other units, and the reckless Leftist tendency prevalent in the guerrilla zone threatened it in this case.

The Leftist Soviet policy helped to accelerate the corruption and degeneration of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units which only recently had been our allies or sympathizers.

The Leftist opportunists conducted their work with the Chinese units in an ultra-Leftist fashion. They indiscriminately promoted such slogans as "Down with the officers from the landlord and propertied class!" and "Soldiers should mutiny and come over to the guerrilla army!" claiming that we should "establish a united front only with the rank and file" and "make the soldiers of the NSA kill their commanders and rise in revolt." The only result they produced was the harmful one of destroying our unity with the upper echelons of the Chinese units.

The Chinese nationalist units killed Korean people, saying that they were "Japanese puppets" and "*laogaoli gongchandang* " ("Korean communists"–Tr.).

The Japanese imperialists took advantage of this situation to launch an all-out offensive to drive wedges between the Korean and Chinese peoples, between the Korean and Chinese communists and between our Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and the Chinese nationalist army. From the first day of their occupation of Manchuria, they made desperate efforts to gain control over the NSA units which had broken with Zhang Xue-

liang's former Northeast Army and fought under the anti-Japanese banner. What they feared most here was the alignment of our guerrilla army and the NSA. They were well aware that such an alignment of communists and NSA units would produce a formidable force that would undermine Japanese imperialist rule and be a stumbling block in their path of aggression across the continent.

Japan's skill in sowing dissension was clearly revealed in the Wanbaoshan incident, the Longjing incident (an abortive scheme), and the Fushun incident. The Japanese strategic intelligence service, which was skilled in underhand subterfuge, did not hesitate to invent such a murderous drama as the Fushun incident, at which even a beast or a stone Buddha might feel shame, in order to weaken the good-neighbourly relations between the Korean and Chinese peoples. The Fushun incident involved the murder of an innocent Chinese in Fushun by a Japanese who was ordered to stab him with a dagger provided by the Japanese intelligence service. The murder was committed but the scheme failed to create bad blood between the Korean and Chinese peoples even though the plotters had disguised the murderer in a Korean overcoat to reinforce the rumour that it was a Korean who had murdered the Chinese and escaped. He was identified as a Japanese when his Japanese clothes were spotted under the Korean coat.

A number of such incidents culminated in the Liutiaogou incident and the Lugou Bridge incident. The method Japan applied every time she hatched a plot was equally primitive and brutal.

However, many people were easily deceived by these put-up jobs, even though they themselves often suffered because of the Japanese imperialists' dastardly methods in cooking up their shams.

While spreading rumours, such as "The Korean people will lay claim to Manchuria," and "The communists are going to disarm the NSA," the Japanese imperialists gave the reactionaries belonging to the "Minsaengdan" a reason to clamour for Korean autonomy in Jiandao, that is, for the establishment of a "Korean autonomous region in Jiandao" and a "Korean legal autonomous government," so playing the Korean people off against the Chinese people. At other times they would set fire to Chinese houses and spread the lie that the Korean guerrillas had done it.

Another reason for the collapse of the united front was that the Japanese imperialists laid schemes for the surrender of the leaders of the Chinese anti-Japanese units, which resulted in the degeneration of the latter's anti-Japanese consciousness.

In January 1933, Wang Yu-zhen, who was in Tumenzi, Hunchun County, surrendered to the enemy with his soldiers. Hundreds of them were restructured into a special guerrilla unit fighting against us. In February, half of the soldiers of Guan's unit in Xiaowangqing capitulated and joined the defence corps and the public security bureau of Manchukuo; in the same month scores of the officers and men of the Ma Gui-lin's unit which was appearing frequently in the vicinity of Dahuanggou, capitulated and joined the self-defence corps in Hamatang. The officers and soldiers of

the Jiang Hai's unit in Erchazigou, Wangqing County, and of the Qingshan unit in Huoshaopu offered to surrender.

The Japanese imperialists bribed the notorious bandit leader Tong Shan-hao, who was holding the Laoheishan area, and instigated him to murder all the guerrillas of Ri Kwang's special detachment.

The situation was so bad that the guerrilla army, afraid of the NSA's violence, had to march by night. The Koreans would not be able to keep their heads above ground unless relations with the NSA were improved. Reversing the hostile relations with the NSA and developing an alliance with them was once again a vital task for the Korean communists if they were to continue the revolution.

I made a firm decision to pay a visit to Wu Yi-cheng, the forward area commander of the NSA. Since Wang De-lin left Jiandao, Wu Yi-cheng held the real power in the NSA. I felt confident that if I prevailed upon him, I would be able to put a stop to the difficulties created for guerrilla activities in east Manchuria as a result of the "Kim Myong San incident" and the massacre of Ri Kwang's special detachment, and at the same time I could possibly break the deadlock in which our revolution found itself.

I had a serious discussion with Pan, the provincial party committee member, about negotiations with Wu. Pan acknowledged that my decision was reasonable, but he advised me not to go to Wu in person. He was of the opinion that it would be difficult for a Korean, rather than a Chinese, to persuade him, for he was too self-important and too prejudiced. He added that in

order to win over Commanders Wu and Chai we would have to prevent Ri Chong Chon, the latter's adviser, from interfering in the negotiations, and that this was a problem.

I insisted on going to negotiate in spite of all the difficulties Pan had pointed out.

I said, "Ri is a Korean; even though he is anti-communist, he will not place obstacles in our way if we argue persuasively. He is an old acquaintance of mine. I spoke with him several times during the meeting on the merging of the three nationalist organizations in Jilin. My father was also close friends with him."

Pan tried his best to prevent my making an adventure, saying:

"What difference does it make now whether someone is an acquaintance or a stranger? Do you think they will treat acquaintances differently from strangers? Worse still, they say Wu is a die-hard. The odds are against us."

"I once managed to win over Commander Yu in Antu. So why not Wu Yi-cheng?"

"When you were negotiating with Yu, Mr. Liu Ben-cao was his chief of staff. That gave you a good start."

"I could have a good start in Wu's unit, too. Chen Han-zhang is working as chief secretary in the unit. The chief of staff, Hu Jin-min, is one of our operatives, too."

This remark threw myself into consternation. Only a few days before I had received a letter from Chen, whose role as a powerful support I always emphasized, requesting me to take decisive measures to assist him. On the grounds that it was almost

impossible to effect an alliance with Commander Wu through his own efforts, he wrote that he "would like measures to be taken by the organization as soon as possible, for only Comrade Kim Il Sung will be able to find a solution to this problem." Pan, too, knew about this.

"The revolution has a long way to go, and you should not engage in such an adventure. Please think about it carefully, for mercy's sake," Pan implored. "You must not regard yourself as your own property. One slip and you could become another Ri Kwang. Don't forget that. Even if we all die, you must survive and fight to the last for Korea on behalf of all of us."

Pan's remark moved me, but I could not abandon my commitment to an allied front.

After Pan had left for Hunchun County delegates from guerrilla units in every county of east Manchuria gathered in Wangqing and held a meeting to discuss the question of a united front. The main agenda item was the formation of an alliance with the NSA, in other words, who should go to lead negotiations at Luozigou, where the NSA units led by Wu Yi-cheng, Chai Shi-rong, Shi Zhong-heng and others, were concentrated.

I insisted that I should go. The meeting decided that my journey to Luozigou would be possible only with an escort of 100 guerrillas, and granted permission. The journey to Wu Yi-cheng was no simple one as we have already seen.

In order to negotiate with Wu, I had to find out about the situation there through such people as Chen Han-zhang and Hu

Jin-min. However, Chen was Wu's chief secretary and a serious man; he would not play games, shut away in his office. And if he showed himself outside, he could be misunderstood if he made a contact with Koreans. Nevertheless, he was sure to help me in my work no matter what the risk because in former days he had been a member of the Young Communist League organization in which I had had a part, and we had pledged loyalty to one another at that time.

After writing to Chen and Hu, I sent letters to Wu Yi-cheng and Chai Shi-rong, explaining the purpose of our journey to Luozigou. To make the letters more formal, we stamped a large, square seal beside the name of the sender.

After dispatching the letters we inquired into the reaction in Wu's unit through the revolutionary organizations in Luozigou, and the reports were good. The underground organizations even informed us of the fact that the NSA had set up a placard with the words "Welcome to the Korean Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army!" at the entrance to the town.

I left for Luozigou with 100 selected men. As they marched along in new uniform, and with new rifles and leather kit-bags over their shoulders, they were a spectacular sight.

I rode on a white horse at the head of the column.

On arrival at Taipinggou we issued a statement on the AJPGA's entry into Luozigou and dispatched an orderly to Wu's unit; then we settled in for the night, waiting for a reply.

The following day we received notice from Luozigou that they

had agreed to the proposed negotiations. Chen Han-zhang's assurances had proved effective in persuading Wu to accept our proposal. When he received my letter he recommended Commander Kim to Wu as someone he knew well, and said I was a very good-natured man.

As he listened to his recommendation Wu asked him, "He is a communist, how is it that you know him so well? Are you then a communist, too?"

Chen replied that Commander Kim was his schoolmate and an old acquaintance.

"If he is your schoolmate and a good fellow, then I will talk to him over luncheon."

We posted a company from Hunchun in the lower village of Taipinggou so that they could support us in case the NSA should detain us or do us harm; then our remaining 50 men entered the town of Luozigou in an imposing array, flying a red flag and sounding a trumpet.

Chen Han-zhang, who came to greet the guerrilla army, guided me to the headquarters of the NSA. Jo Tong Uk and Ri Song Rim, my orderly, who were to assist me during the negotiations, followed Chen, with wooden-cased Mausers at their sides. There were several aides of Kuomintang origin in the headquarters.

Wu Yi-cheng was a man of fine presence with a long beard. I had heard a rumour that he was so arrogant he would not stand up even when a visitor called and would talk to him, sprawling on a tigerskin and drinking tea; but on that day he greeted me with all

due formality. However, he did not maintain the Chinese custom of offering his guest tea.

At first I greeted him in a humble manner, saying, "We highly appreciate the patriotism of your unit's joining the anti-Japanese struggle when many units from Zhang Xue-liang's former Northeast Army were surrendering to the Japanese army."

My greeting brought a smile to the corners of his lips and he ordered his aide to bring tea.

"I have heard reports that you, Commander Kim, are fighting well against the Japanese. Your army is not great in numbers but you know how to fight; we are not like you, even though we have many soldiers. My men say the soldiers you brought with you have brand-new rifles; will you not exchange some of them for our old ones?"

The negotiations thus began with his words of greeting, which were somewhat perplexing. Facing Commander Wu as he tried to fathom the other party's thoughts by praising him on and at the same time requesting something difficult to comply with, I judged that he was a competent diplomat and shrewd man who had known both sweetness and bitterness in his life. I did not think that a forward area commander, the leader of thousands of soldiers, would make such a request at the first meeting without forethought, simply out of greed for a few new rifles.

"You say exchange? We can give them free."

I satisfied his request without any fuss and added in a casual manner, "Is there any need to deal in such petty matters? We'll

have plenty of them if we fight a battle with the Japanese. But since you request it, we will give them as a gift."

Wu stroked his beard down and then approached me from a different angle, "Well, what is your communist party? That man, Chen Han-zhang, says the communist party is not bad, but I can't believe him. Zhou Bao-zhong is also a communist and when he was my adviser, I found him not to my liking, always wasting time for some reason, I don't know why. So I got rid of him. By the way, I heard that you communists destroy the mountain shrines when you pass by them."

"Why should we destroy the shrines? It is a lie told by wicked people to discredit the communists."

"Then, do you, Commander Kim, pay tribute at the shrines?"

"I neither destroy them nor pay tribute to them, for it is nothing to do with me. What about you, Commander Wu?"

"Neither do I."

"Then both of us are the same in that neither pays tribute."

Dumbfounded, he stroked his beard once again with a smile on his face.

"That's right. By the way, they say that communists, men and women alike, all sleep under one quilt and they plunder the people of their property. Is this true?"

I realized that the success of the negotiations depended on how I could manage this question and that I must give him an appropriate answer which would give him a correct understanding of communists.

"That is another fabrication of the bad elements. It is true that some alleged communists have deprived landowners of their lands, regardless of whether they are pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese, but we don't regard it as a good thing. However, the landlords should have had the generosity to give the sharecroppers who were dying from hunger, some grain. Can it be right that they regard them with indifference while they feather their own nests? Why should the poor peasants revolt if they are given food grain? Hungry people have no way to survive but by fighting. I may be wrong but I believe the Taiping Rebellion took place in China in the last century for the same reason."

Wu Yi-cheng nodded his head.

"That seems right. Those who wish to eat their fill and live comfortably by themselves are evil-doers in this chaotic situation."

Grasping my opportunity, I continued:

"That men and women sleep under one quilt is a lie the Japanese invented to insult the communists. There are many woman soldiers in our guerrilla unit, but such a thing never occurs. If they fall in love, they get married. Our discipline between men and women is very strict."

"That's what I mean. It must never happen that several men sleep with one woman in turn."

"Of course not. There are no men in the world more decent-minded than us communists."

When our conversation reached this point, Wu began calling me "Commander Kim" and stopped using awkward words.

"Ha, ha! Commander Kim is trying to make a communist of me."

"I have no thought of making you a communist, Commander Wu. A man cannot be made a communist by someone else. However, I think it advisable to unite our efforts to defeat the Japanese imperialists."

Wu Yi-cheng gestured nervously with his arm.

"We don't collaborate with the communists, even if it means fighting on our own."

"Surely it is good to fight the Japanese in cooperation when we are not strong enough alone?"

"I still don't need favours from the communists."

"No one can predict his future. Some day you may ask a favour from us."

"Well, that may well be possible. God only knows what awaits a man. By the way, may I ask a favour of you? Won't you join *jiajiali* ? It is better than the communist party, I think," he said casually.

Seeing me hesitate, he looked at me in amusement.

I was perplexed to hear the word *jiajiali* in that context. Commander Wu had puzzled me completely.

Jiajiali is a Chinese word meaning "one family." It is an organization of the Chinese people which was also called *Qinghongbang.* It was formed as a union against the emperor by the workers who dug canals and hauled boats, when they could no longer endure their hardships. There was no private property in

this organization, and it was a large one for that time.

When people swear brotherhood, they become elder and younger brothers, but people joining *jiajiali* become fathers and sons. A man who wishes to find a father could join it, but not a man who wishes to find sons. The higher the caste of the *jiajiali* was, the more dignified its members were and the more authority they possessed. A ceremony was held when a man joined. Kim Jae Bom (alias Kim Phyong), who had joined a *jiajiali* of the 24th generation on our instructions, had said that the ceremony was spectacular. A new member had to bow hundreds of times to those who were to become his fathers and seniors.

Now I had received an embarrassing invitation to join such an organization. If I declined, the negotiations which had gone smoothly so far might be deadlocked; but if I accepted, he would take me to a Buddha and make me bow there and then, which would mean making myself subordinate to Wu Yi-cheng. When preparing for the negotiations, we had not anticipated this kind of situation. Anyway, I had to resolve the dilemma.

"It would be a fine thing for you and I to enter a *jiajiali,* but before we join another organization we are obliged to obtain permission from the party organization. If it is not granted, I can do nothing. Let us leave the matter until I obtain permission from our organization."

"Ha, ha! Then, it seems you are a half-baked commander, not a fully-fledged one."

Commander Wu looked at me with a slightly dissatisfied

expression on his face and all of a sudden asked me, “Do you drink, Commander Kim?”

“I can drink, but don’t even if I want to, lest it hamper me in fighting against the Japanese.”

“Your communist party is agreeable to me. I wish to cooperate with you but I am afraid I would have to imbibe Marxism. Spreading communism among our people is not good.”

“Don’t worry about it, Commander. We have no intention of propagating communism. We will only carry out anti-Japanese propaganda.”

“Your party is very gentlemanly for a communist party. But it was wrong of the communists in Wangqing to disarm Commander Guan’s battalion. What is your opinion of that incident?”

“What more is there to say about it? It was the most serious mistake of all possible mistakes. So we severely reprimanded the Wangqing special detachment last year.”

“Commander Kim, you are a fair-minded soldier. By the way, some people say that the communist party is right in everything it does. How could that be?”

“A communist is also a man. So how could he make no mistakes? I, too, make mistakes now and then, for I am not a machine, but a man. When one tries to do a great deal of work, one is bound to make mistakes sometimes. So we study hard and improve ourselves so that we shall commit fewer errors.”

“You are right. Lazy men who do nothing will make no mistakes. The communists do many things and this we appreciate.

In general, it is amusing to talk to you, Commander Kim. You are candid, so we do understand each other."

Saying this, Wu wound up the negotiations for the moment. He took me politely by the hand and then released his grip. I was sure the negotiations were going well. On the spur of the moment he said good-humouredly that Chen Han-zhang, a friend of Commander Kim, helped him with his writing and that without him he was as good as blind.

Wu asked me whether I knew Hu Jin-min. I answered that I did not know him, for I was afraid the nature of our relations might be revealed if I answered in the affirmative. He called Hu Jin-min and politely introduced him to me. Hu and I said, "How do you do?" to each other as if we were strangers. Chen Han-zhang told me that it was very rare for Wu to introduce his staff officers to visitors in this way; he said confidently that I could regard the negotiations as successful.

That day we agreed with Wu Yi-cheng to establish a standing body called the Joint Anti-Japanese Army Coordination Commission which would keep the AJPGA and the NSA in touch with each other and coordinate their actions. We also discussed the membership of the commission. Wang Run-cheng, a Chinese, was appointed a representative of the Chinese units and Jo Tong Uk, a representative of our unit. We decided to set up the commission's office in Luozigou, near Commander Wu's headquarters.

Wu Yi-cheng invited us to luncheon. Chen Han-zhang informed me that this also was special treatment.

The conversation over luncheon also took place in a friendly atmosphere. Whenever the Japanese imperialist occupation of Manchuria came up, Wu would frown indignantly, twitching his thick eyebrows. He was also indignant at the murder of Ri Kwang by Tong Shan-hao.

"They are indigenous bandits, not our sort. That Tong Shan-hao was certain to become a cat's paw of the Japanese! That his ilk has harmed your army is a cursed crime. I am ashamed that such a devil can be one of our Chinese nation."

This remark gave me a glimpse of another side of his personality.

I was satisfied with the result of the negotiations and Wu Yi-cheng's hospitality. Wu put on airs, and he was tainted with the ideology of the Kuomintang, but that was not the fundamental point. What was important was his exceptionally strong anti-Japanese spirit and his great commitment to national salvation. Cooperation would have been inconceivable if only our distinctions had been asserted, the ideology, class and nationality which separated us. The goal of an allied front permitted us to scorn such limitations.

That same day I sent a liaison man to Xiaowangqing with a letter saying that cooperation with Commander Wu had been successfully arranged, that the question of Chai Shi-rong was still outstanding, that we would try to approach him gradually, and that the unit should make full preparations for action because we needed to attack a large walled county town like Dongning in

order to step up the united front.

After our success in the first contact with Wu Yi-cheng, we immediately tackled the work of winning over the unit of Chai Shi-rong, the most obstinate force among the NSA units, to the anti-Japanese united front. Chen Han-zhang said Commander Wu seemed to be quite determined, but Commander Chai posed a problem; he was anxious to find a way of expelling Ri Chong Chon. Commander Wu had only one brigade. Commander Chai had a larger force.

I suggested negotiations to Ri Chong Chon, but he declined. On the contrary, he incited Chai to disarm the communist army. But Chai, who would normally heed any advice from Ri, objected to that trick. He said that if he were not careful, he could get into serious trouble, since Commander Wu Yi-cheng had dined with Commander Kim and that, moreover, Commander Kim was in command of the Wangqing unit, which fought bravely. Ri Chong Chon worked so hard to incite Chai against communism that we could not even meet him face to face.

The only way of solving the problem was to separate Commander Chai's unit from Wu Yi-cheng. The method used to separate Wu Yi-cheng, who had agreed to cooperate with us, from Chai Shi-rong was to bring Shi Zhong-heng's brigade, Wu Yi-cheng's main force, under our influence. If we dealt with the brigade commander properly, we could further consolidate our initial success in the negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng.

I inquired about the composition of his brigade; most of the

soldiers were of lower class origin. Shi Zhong-heng himself had been a swineherd for a landowner at the age of 9 and then joined the army to support himself. He had served under Wang De-lin in the Jilin field army; after the September 18 incident he had entered the national salvation army and led a platoon, a company and a regiment, and now he was a brigadier-general. He was a typical soldier who relished fighting.

I went to see Shi Zhong-heng with a letter of introduction from Hu Jin-min on the day Hu wrote it. When I requested an interview, Shi complied without ceremony, setting all his other business aside. He treated me warmly, like a friend, saying that a visit to his unit by Commander Kim who fought the Japanese so successfully was an auspicious occasion. He was neither against communism, nor was he like a warlord; he was open-hearted and gentle.

Shi said that our unit's successive victories in the fight with the Japanese army were a source of pride to the people living in east Manchuria as well as to the Korean people. At that time we had already dealt heavy blows against the Japanese imperialists in the battles at Jiapigou, Liangshuiquanzi and several other places. Although the media had not reported them, the news of those battles had been spread widely throughout the Jiandao area. To my surprise, Shi was well aware of the details of the battles and their results.

He welcomed my proposal for a joint attack on the Dongning county town. He said, "I had long wished for a strong neighbour and friend such as your army, Commander Kim .We are brothers

from today. Your enemy is my enemy and your friend is my friend."

We embraced each other warmly in celebration of the success of our negotiations. From that day we were brothers and comrades-in-arms who shared the days of fierce battle like brothers. Our close friendship remained unchanged until he fell in battle as the commander of the 2nd Independent Division.

The outcome of the negotiations at Luozigou removed the greatest obstacle in the way of the anti-Japanese revolution. While cooperation with Commander Yu was the starting-point of the allied front, the negotiation with Wu Yi-cheng was a historic step towards extending that initial success gained to the whole area of east Manchuria; it was a stunning event which put an end to the meaningless confrontation and bloodshed occurring between the Korean and Chinese nations since the May 30 Uprising and the Wanbaoshan incident and merged the fierce anti-Manchukuo and anti-Japanese tendencies into one raging torrent.

Through the negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng and Shi Zhong-heng we realized quite clearly that a united front was possible only when our own forces were strong. Had we not displayed our military strength to the full through the campaigns in south and north Manchuria in 1932 and through the large and small battles in 1933 in and around Wangqing, and had we not developed the guerrilla army into an indomitable armed force, Wu Yi-cheng would have turned us away from his door. The alliance with Wu Yi-cheng was established so smoothly because we were strong,

because our politics and morals were superior to those of the NSA, and because our ardent patriotism, international fraternity and unshakable faith in the validity of our cause won his sympathy.

Since the day I achieved cooperation with the NSA I have regarded it as axiomatic that the best resources for an allied front are one's own forces and that one cannot fight in cooperation with any friendly army or country without fostering one's own strength, and I have devoted my entire life to consolidating the motive force of the revolution.

Wu Yi-cheng and Chai Shi-rong also agreed with my idea of attacking the Dongning county town. We held a joint meeting in Luozigou with Wu Yi-cheng, Shi Zhong-heng, Chai Shi-rong and other commanders of the NSA, and mapped out a detailed plan of operations for the battle; then I wrote to our headquarters in Wangqing once again.

Thanks to the successful negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng and victory in the battle at Dongning county town, we became widely known to the guerrilla units of the Koreans, Chinese NSA units and other anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese forces. Cooperation with Wu Yi-cheng convinced me more than ever that strengthening the united front was essential to the survival of the anti-Japanese revolution as a whole and the key to promoting the revolution.

Even after I had left Jiandao and moved the theatre of operations to the Changbai area, I looked back with emotion upon the days when I strove to make the negotiations with Wu a success. Wu Yi-cheng, now as a member of the Northeast Anti-

Japanese Allied Army, was fighting in those days on our flank, with Fusong and its district as his base. When I heard he was fighting nearby, I was reminded of our old friendship, sealed in the days of the common struggle.

With more than 100 guerrillas, I went to the woods east of Xigang where the secret camps of Wu Yi-cheng's unit were located. Wu rushed to the edge of the camp and embraced me. We hugged each other as warmly as childhood friends separated for scores of years.

No sooner did I feel Wu's coarse moustache smelling of gunsmoke on my chin, than a lump rose in my throat despite myself. I could not understand why a meeting with this Chinese man whose character contained so much of the warlord, who was so very proud, should make me choke. Our friendship sealed in the days of battle was quite exceptional. I was greatly moved that Commander Wu treated me quite sincerely like his own brother, disregarding my nationality and age.

No friendship in the world can be more sincere, more ardent and more durable than friendship formed under the hail of fire. Is this not the reason why we call the friendship between the very closest of friends a militant friendship?

I could find no trace in him of the former haughty pride which led him to assess people's ability with his sharp eyes while lounging over a tigerskin. He looked like an old, generous villager rather than a hero of the green forest with thousands of soldiers under his command. He seemed to have lost weight and his eyes

seemed less bright.

I stayed for two days in Wu Yi-cheng's secret camp before returning. As I was leaving Wu Yi-cheng offered to turn over 100 of his soldiers to me. When I declined, he feigned anger, saying, "You obviously lack or want nothing. However, Commander Kim, as a friend I must give you some assistance towards your preparations for a great campaign. Those 100 men must fight under your command rather than following me. As the saying goes–Mugwort grows straight on the hemp plantation."

I have not met Wu Yi-cheng since then. At the end of the year I heard that Wu had gone to the Soviet Union after entrusting his unit to another man; then I lost contact with him and heard no more of him.

Wu Yi-cheng was not simply a companion of convenience while we were putting together the allied front; he was an unforgettable comrade-in-arms who braved the hail of bullets shoulder to shoulder with us in battle. How Commander Wu spent the latter part of his life and how he met his fate still remain unclear. Worst of all, there is nowhere I can turn for reliable information.

If he remained loyal to the ideal of patriotism until the last moment of his life, then that is enough to satisfy me.

3. The Battle of the Dongning County Town

After the negotiations at Luozigou, the Joint Anti-Japanese Army Coordination Commission worked hard among the national salvation army units. Members of the commission even infiltrated the mountain rebels and made strenuous efforts to draw them into the anti-Japanese united front.

Early in September 1933, this commission arranged a joint meeting at which we discussed with Wu Yi-cheng, Shi Zhong-heng, Chai Shi-rong, Li San-xia and other leaders of the Chinese nationalist units at Laomuzhuhe near Luozigou the plan for attacking the Dongning county town (Sanchakou) and finalized the plan of operations. On the recommendation of Commander Wu Yi-cheng the meeting unanimously approved the operation plan as we had drafted it.

We did not attack the town immediately after the negotiations at Luozigou; we allowed ourselves more than two months for preparation, because we attached special importance to this battle. We regarded this battle as a watershed in making our anti-Japanese guerrilla army fully legitimate; we also believed that an agreement on the united front with the NSA units would be brought into

effect through victory in this battle. Should we succeed in this battle the united front with the Chinese nationalist units would be put on a rock-solid foundation; if not, the positive outcome of the negotiations at Luozigou would be undermined, and the united front would collapse while still in the stage of formation. Failure in the battle would also stain the military prestige of our guerrilla army which we had built up in the course of bloody battles. It would also cause serious problems if the NSA complained that they had been crushed because of the united front.

This was indeed a tough test for us. Our reconnaissance and information from our local organizations confirmed that a 500-strong Kwantung Army unit led by Ishida, a puppet Manchukuo army regiment commanded by Commander Qing, and puppet Manchukuo police and self-defence corps were posted in the county town. Worse still, the enemy was entrenched in an impregnable fortress which was armed with artillery and other modern weapons.

At that time some leaders of the Chinese units estimated the chances of occupying the town at only 30 per cent. At the meeting they even expressed concern that our forces were too small in comparison to the enemy, saying that internationally recognized war manuals stated that the forces of the attacker should be three times greater than those of the defender.

However, Wu Yi-cheng and other people retorted that they had nothing to learn from such silly prattle, which could only make sense in the Japanese military academy that Ri Chong Chon had

attended. They criticized such a passive attitude to the battle.

As the NSA had already failed once in an attack on the Dongning county town, it was no accident that some commanders overestimated the enemy's strength, fearing the Japanese army with its boasts of "invincibility."

Once a plan was adopted at the meeting, the coordination commission, in collaboration with Hu Jin-min, allocated to each unit the number of troops which should participate in the battle.

We were to contribute three companies, one from each of Wangqing, Hunchun and Yanji to the battle, and we summoned them to Luozigou.

The company I had taken from Wangqing and the company which Paek Il Phyong, the battalion political commissar, led all the way from Hunchun, met amidst great emotion near Luozigou at the end of August 1933.

But to our regret, the comrades from Yanji did not arrive at the rendezvous, for the message had not reached them in time. The Yanji battalion had selected Choe Hyon's company, which was the strongest. Before starting the march Choe Hyon had ensured that every man was supplied with 150 rounds of ammunition and a new pair of shoes. The company left Beidong and arrived at Macun by forced march in the middle of September, when we were in Xiaowangqing after the battle on the Dongning county town.

As we entered Luozigou with the men from Hunchun, the men and officers of the NSA, together with the local residents, welcomed us enthusiastically. Quite a few peasants from

neighbouring villages came to welcome us too. Their warm welcome was a clear expression of the strength of the anti-Japanese organizations in this place.

Behind the crowd who were waving their hands and shouting for joy at our unit stood the able revolutionary Choe Jong Hwa. Though in the service of Manchukuo, as the head of the Anti-Japanese Association in Luozigou, he worked, in fact, mostly for the NSA in the capacity of a member of the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee, and he publicized widely the correctness of our line of an anti-Japanese allied front in Luozigou. He encouraged people to supply the NSA units with food grain and cloth.

We lined up in the street where the Chinese people lived, and made speeches appealing for an anti-Japanese national salvation movement. Then we danced and sang in groups. Even the Chinese shopkeepers along the street suspended their business and came out in the street to enjoy the performance. As the guerrillas and the NSA soldiers mingled with one another the town of Luozigou became animated and festive. The whole town, both the Korean and Chinese streets, was enveloped in a holiday atmosphere.

Young people who had heard of us jostled each other to see Commander Kim. They were arguing over whether Commander Kim hailed from Phyongan Province, or Hamgyong Province, or Kyongsang Province.

The children were keen to touch the Model 38 rifles and cartridge belts. Each soldier wore three cartridge belts, one on the waist and two across his shoulders. As one belt contained 100

cartridges, every one was carrying a load of 300.

Large numbers of women came and tugged at the guerrillas' arms, saying, "Men fighting for the country, join us for lunch."

Even women living several miles away from Luozigou brought lunch and served the guerrillas.

On the day of our arrival at Luozigou, I, accompanied by those working on the coordination commission, paid a visit to Commander Wu Yi-cheng at his lodging.

As old acquaintances, we had an amicable conversation. It was a candid conversation between two men, not a conversation designed to fathom each other's thoughts, like the first one we had in June.

What had worried me most on my way to Luozigou was whether Commander Wu had given up the idea of fighting the battle or not in the meantime. I wondered whether such people as Ri Chong Chon, who were not pleased with the alliance, might not have persuaded Wu Yi-cheng to abandon the idea of the battle and set back the relations between the NSA and ourselves to the state preceding our negotiations. Those working on the coordination commission had informed me on several occasions of Ri Chong Chon's ceaseless efforts to get Chai Shi-rong to abort our cooperation. They had been apprehensive that this trick might affect Commander Wu.

But they need not have worried. His commitment to the allied front remained unchanged, and his determination to redeem his previous defeat through the attack on the Dongning county town

was as firm as ever.

What Commander Wu felt was most ignominious was the blow he had suffered during the Japanese "mopping-up" operation in Luozigou at the end of 1932. At that time the Japanese had mobilized ten air force fighters and hundreds of troops and crushed the NSA mercilessly. Luozigou had been reduced to ashes and the NSA driven away to Chengnancun, Xintunzi and Shitouhezi.

"To be honest, our numbers were greater than the Japanese. But we abandoned Luozigou and fled to the mountainous area. Whenever I am reminded of the defeat we suffered at that time, I cannot sleep. Even though the Japanese ruffians who occupied Luozigou beheaded innocent people and hung their heads on the south gate, we remained entrenched in the mountainous area without so much as a thought of revenge. We were simply afraid of the Japanese army. What shame! I will make them pay dearly for it at Dongning."

As he said this, Wu frequently put his hand on the Mauser on his side. As I saw him burning with thoughts of revenge, I realized that his determination had not lessened. It was a good omen for the allied front.

That day I told him the story of my past life in outline, as I had done to Pan, the member of the provincial party committee. In return Commander Wu told me his own personal history. Through the unceremonious talk of that day I learned that his native district was somewhere near Dongchang in Shandong Province and he had the nickname of Wu Ji-cheng. When we were holding our

conversation two of our guerrillas stood sentry on the roof of Commander Wu's lodging. The NSA organized a strict watch around the headquarters that day.

That day Wu Yi-cheng talked as the rumours portrayed him, lounging idly on a tigerskin. He disliked talking formally, sitting crosslegged on a chair, probably because he was corpulent. So I had to talk to him while I lounged with my arm across a wooden pillow.

Wu Yi-cheng ordered his men to prepare delicious food for lunch as he had a distinguished guest. I told him I had brought my own food and there was no need to take the trouble to prepare lunch for me. The man who accompanied us and carried our meals in those days was a Chinese soldier with a pockmarked face. Wu was very interested in the fact that I was speaking fluent Chinese. The knowledge of Chinese I had acquired thanks to my father proved its worth in my work with Wu Yi-cheng.

In Luozigou, the Wangqing and Hunchun companies discussed on several occasions the tactics for political work among the people.

We stressed the following to the guerrillas; the future direction of the NSA depends on the result of this battle; if our guerrilla army fights bravely in the van the NSA will follow us; if we fail to play our part, they will abandon us; so you must always set an example both in everyday life and in the battle; we are going to fight this battle for the sake of the allied front rather than for a few rifles and sacks of grain; we are staking the future of the allied

front on this battle; let the NSA soldiers win all the trophies; let us not care what they take, no matter what it is, even opium; but let us keep in mind that there will be no concessions in the political and moral aspects of our conduct.

Brigadier-general Shi Zhong-heng, one of the leaders of the Chinese nationalist units, supported the plan of the battle most actively. During our stay in Luozigou a friendship transcending nationality and affiliation sprang up between Shi and myself. When the large forces of our guerrilla army and the NSA units were marching towards the Dongning county town from Luozigou he tried to stay near our unit all the time. When bivouacking he tried to pitch his tents near ours and act together with our unit in the battle. During the march of a hundred miles from Luozigou to the Dongning county town, we came to understand each other on a deeper level.

The expeditionary forces which had left Luozigou in early September spent several days on the road. The march was a clear demonstration of the noble revolutionary spirit and sincere humane traits of the Korean communists. The political and moral differences between the AJPGA and the NSA were clearly expressed during the march and in our daily life.

Wherever we went, we behaved as an army of the people. We did not destroy the mountain shrines on our way nor lay our hands on the delicious foods offered in sacrifice; we did not give it a second glance. When we stopped at Chinese villages we held parties, hung posters on the walls and conducted oral propaganda.

Other units caused the villagers much trouble, but we helped them in fetching water, grinding grain, threshing and weaving cornstalks for fences. In the villages where Koreans were living we read to them from story-books.

Since we behaved in this way, the people made rice cakes and killed pigs for us, saying that our army really appreciated them. They said that other units were hopelessly bad-tempered and rude, but Commander Kim's unit was so gentle, affable and warm-hearted that they spared nothing in their efforts to please us.

Whenever he witnessed the sincere loving care we took of the people and the genuine support and welcome the people accorded us, Brigadier-general Shi Zhong-heng praised us profusely, holding his thumb up, and saying that Commander Kim's army was a unique gentlemen's army. On several occasions he instructed his men that they should follow the example of the communist army led by Commander Kim.

"At present some villains are disgracing the NSA in the van of our column. You should not follow their example. God will bless you only if your manners are noble. I hereby warn you in advance that if any unpleasant acts such as toying with women, laying hands on others' property or blustering at people should occur, the man will be strictly dealt with, whoever he may be."

Shi Zhong-heng's orders were effective in alerting his men to the need for good behaviour.

Some soldiers of the NSA took flight at the sight of grain stacks on moonless nights, saying that the stacks were Japanese soldiers.

After this occurred several times we made our guerrilla army march in the van of the column and the NSA units were made to bring up the rear. This insignificant measure inspired the guerrillas to new efforts. They realized very keenly that victory in the battle did not depend on the NSA soldiers who confused grain stacks with Japanese soldiers, but on themselves, that they themselves were the decisive force driving the wheel of the allied front, and they speeded up the march.

The guerrillas studied even on the march. They sometimes argued about serious political subjects.

"Hey, Comrade Kang, will you please explain the purpose of our attack on the Dongning county town clearly and wittily? When the Commander told us about it in Luozigou it seemed understandable but somehow it seems hard to grasp now."

The wily question came from a man at the tail of the Wangqing company as the expeditionary forces were nearing Laoheishan. He did not ask it out of ignorance; he wanted to test his understanding.

Kang, who had been asked the question, was also a wily man.

"Ah, look at him. Trying to roast his crab on someone else's fire. If you are so hazy about it, then I will tell you. If I must, I will sing it to the tune of the *Ten-point Song*."

And he really did begin to sing it without giving the asker a chance to speak.

What is first?
Realizing the allied front

Even though the heavens collapse,
This is first.

What is second?
Expanding our unique guerrilla zone, the citadel,
To the Soviet-Manchurian border,
This is second.

What is third?
Clearing the passage to the Soviet Union
Which is welcoming even in chilly weather,
This is third.

... ...

Pak, who asked the question, was struck speechless and gestured in astonishment.

"Your talent is worth far more than its weight in gold. The purpose is as clear as the full moon in a blue sky even to such a stupid man as me."

Kang, the talent of the Wangqing company, deserved this admiration. He was able to encapsulate in that song the complicated circumstances of World War I and the appalling course of political calamities beginning with the outburst of the September 18 incident to the foundation of the Kingdom of Manchukuo.

His song, which expressed the purpose of the battle poetically

in simple words, spread in no time from the Wangqing company to the Hunchun company, to the brigade of Shi Zhong-heng and to Chai Shi-rong's unit. Some of the NSA soldiers hummed the song on the march. The NSA soldiers tried their best to follow the example set by our unit.

But not all the officers and men of the NSA behaved in that way . Many of them were expecting a windfall, dreaming of the trophies they would be distributing before long. I could seldom find the soldiers who were talking, with noble anti-Japanese sentiment, about expanding the area of operations to the border area of the Soviet Union and Manchuria or restoring Manchuria through a strong and secure allied front with the AJPGA.

One of Shi Zhong-heng's soldiers marching in the rear of our unit asked one of his companions, "Hey, will there be much opium in Dongning?"

"Well, it may be easily obtainable as there is a regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army there. They cannot exist without opium, can they? But why are you talking about opium all of a sudden when you don't smoke it?" said the other, glancing at him dubiously.

"Why! Opium is the same as money, and money is opium. They say you can fly to Yangzhou on a crane if you have a lot of money."

"You are right! They say one cannot see the sights of Hangzhou without money. You can go to Hangzhou and Xuzhou with opium which is worth a lot of money. All I want to get is a Japanese-

made electric torch."

"Don't worry about a small thing like that. You can surely get one, since there are so many Japanese soldiers."

"Don't talk so big. Opium and electric torches can only be taken when the battle ends in victory. Do you think the town will be so simple to capture?"

This conversation I overheard weighed heavily on my mind. Would those soldiers of the NSA who were preoccupied with trophies fight hand to hand with "the warriors of the invincible imperial army"? Would they charge like human bullets at the enemy's battery, for the sake of the Republic of China?

There was something unsettling in their way of talking and their gloomy eyes. It was a bad omen.

In Laoheishan we held a joint meeting of the Wangqing and Hunchun guerrilla units and once again conducted political work to give them a clear understanding of the purpose of the battle and its military and political significance.

Afterwards we advanced to the area of Gaoancun and Wushegou near the Dongning county town, and there we reconfirmed the enemy's condition and decided upon the plan of battle. That night we located the underground party organization near Dongning. It was an organization Pan had formed in Dongning, Gaoancun, Xinlicun, and Laoheishan and which he had guided while he was working as the secretary of the Suining central county party committee. It had been exposed and tracked down by the enemy in the spring of 1932; some of its members

had escaped to Wangqing and the others, remaining in Dongning, had gone into hiding. At that time Pan had sent not only party members and Young Communist Leaguers but also many guerrillas and civilians to Wangqing.

When leaving for Hunchun, Pan had asked me to locate and contact the party and YCL members hidden underground, re-establish their line of organization and take good care of them for him if I had a chance of going to Dongning. Faithful to his request when we announced in Luozigou the programme of the political work among the people, I included an item on reconstructing the underground party organization in Dongning County through efficient political work among local population.

We restructured the underground party organization in Dongning County with some party members we found in Gaoancun and its vicinity, and re-established its line of organizational guidance in such a way that the underground party organization in Luozigou guided its activities. This organization furnished us with a lot of information. Thanks to its efforts we opened a passage to the Soviet Union without difficulty.

This organization continued to exist in good condition until the 1940s, implementing our orders for secret operations to the letter. Following the meeting at Xiaohaerbaling we frequently used this passage when the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was operating in small units from the secret camps around Mt. Paektu and training camps in Khabarovsk, the Soviet Union. Many small units used to travel through this passage to the homeland and

Jiandao and enter the border area of the Soviet Union and Manchuria from Mt. Paektu. Individual operatives who were sent to the homeland used this passage when travelling to the Maritime Province of the Soviet Union.

The small unit of Jon Mun Uk, which had been operating on a reconnaissance mission in the Soviet-Manchurian frontier region, also received much help from this underground party organization in Dongning. Ya. T. Novichenko[3], an internationalist soldier who served at that time in the army on the opposite side of Dongning County on the Soviet-Manchurian border, recalled that he saw small units of the KPRA making frequent use of this passage. The underground organizations in Dongning were active in harassing the enemy's rear at the time of the war against Japan, and rendered great assistance in the liberation of the county town.

From talks with the inhabitants of Gaoancun and the local area, and with members of the secret organizations, we learned that the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army was strongly anti-Japanese, even though he served Manchukuo, and that there was bitter discord between the puppet Manchukuo army and the Japanese garrison in spite of their apparently peaceful relations. They said that the regimental commander was on good terms with Chinese shopkeepers in the county town and he acceded to their requests. The members of the underground party organization were well acquainted with the shopkeepers. We ordered these members to bring influence to bear on the shopkeepers in order to get the regimental commander to agree to

collaborate with us.

The battle of the Dongning county town began on the night of September 6, 1933, and ended at noon on September 7. I think there were not many instances of battles lasting for 2 days in our war against Japan.

The main thrust of our attack on the county town was directed against a two-storeyed fort built on a mountain ridge outside the west gate. Several heavy and light machineguns were mounted in the fort. They had constructed a secret underground passage and a deep communication trench between the fort and the command post of the Japanese aggressors' army unit, so as to counter the enemy's attack by continuously throwing in reinforcements as necessary. This fort was responsible for the NSA's failure in their attack on the county town.

I posted the Hunchun company which was to block the enemy's reinforcements at a place called Jjajakgol and ordered the Wangqing company to advance along the main line of attack and seize the fort.

At 9 p.m. a demolition party from our unit, which had approached the enemy's line by stealth, concentrated its fire on the fort when my shot gave the signal for the attack on the town. The enemy reinforced his troops continuously through the communication trench and the underground passage. The fierce engagement between our forces and the enemy lasted for hours.

I made the guerrilla unit which had stormed into the town through the west gate blockade the enemy's barracks while other

forces bypassed the fort to the north so as to divert the enemy's fire; then I sent in the demolition team to seize the fort by means of a violent bomb attack. The fort abandoned resistance and fell quiet near dawn. Our main force surrounded the barracks of the Japanese garrison in tight formation and mercilessly checked the enemy's desperate attempt to launch a counterattack. Some of the Japanese narrowly escaped through the north gate.

NSA units which had entered the town in advance in civilian disguise, and the other NSA units which had charged into the town through the east and south gates took up their specified places and fought the enemy.

The headquarters of the puppet Manchukuo army unit sent a representative to us to convey its acceptance of our proposal to attack the Japanese aggressors in joint operation. If the scheme had gone smoothly, the whole town would have fallen into our hands.

At that moment, however, some of Chai Shi-rong's units began plundering the shops under the control of the puppet Manchukuo army and robbing civilian houses; this caused the puppet Manchukuo army to withdraw from the agreement and instead launch an all-out attack on us. The Japanese garrison joined this attack.

Some of the NSA units, scared at the vigour of the enemy's attack, deserted the areas they had occupied and began to flee from the town.

Nevertheless, our unit, succeeding in pinning the enemy into a corner of the town, expanded the area we occupied by means of

all-out street fighting. Encouraged by this, the NSA units then occupied the munitions factory and raided the munitions yards. The street fighting continued for hours.

Recognizing that the purpose of the joint operation had been largely accomplished, I gave orders to withdraw. Guerrilla units that had withdrawn on their own initiative provided covering fire for the withdrawing NSA units.

At this moment we were informed that Brigadier-general Shi Zhong-heng had been seriously wounded and was still in the town. His men had fled the town, leaving their commander in the jaws of death. His aide-de-camp had not assisted him, either.

In my mind's eye I saw the NSA soldiers who had been talking about trophies. When I heard them dreaming about opium and electric torches, I had been apprehensive of pillage and the effect it might have on the course of the battle. Such pillage had taken place during the battle. And then, to our surprise, the soldiers had deserted their commander. In general soldiers regard their superior officers as their fathers or mothers. So in a sense, the NSA soldiers had fled, leaving their parent in the jaws of death. I had heard many stories of soldiers' conduct in war, but I had never heard of such dereliction of duty. There were links between the NSA soldiers' pillage and their faithless desertion of their commander. The greed for material wealth had been overflowed into an extreme of egoism and cowardice.

A dipper that leaks in the house will also leak outside–how profound the truth of this proverb handed down to us by our

ancestors!

A battle may be regarded as an extension and concise expression of everyday life. Soldiers' success in battle is always determined in advance in their everyday life, not on the battlefield. A battle is no more than the epitome and reflection of that life.

History knows no case of an army with inferior moral fibre being crowned with victory. The Nazi army of Hitler's Germany trembled to defeat mainly because they were morally inferior, having abandoned moral principles and driven their caterpillar tracks roughshod over the good and beautiful. The main reason why the Japanese army, which boasted of its invincibility, met its end was also its moral leprosy. Japan could not avoid being smothered by the encirclement of the allied forces and billions of honest-minded people who condemned and hated the Japanese army as the most brutal and shameless in the world. Never in the history of war has there been such a barbarous army as the Japanese army which invaded other countries and slaughtered their peoples, even taking "comfort girls" with them to battlefields.

War is not only a contest of strength, but also a test of morality and ethics. An army that neglects the influence which morality exerts on the course of a war or regards it as an inessential adornment is no more than a heap of rubbish.

I ordered Choe Chun Guk to rescue Shi Zhong-heng.

Choe and his men risked their lives to carry out my orders. Carrying Shi, who had been rescued by our guerrillas, on our backs and covering our withdrawal with fire, we withdrew safely

onto a hill. The guerrillas abused Shi's men who had abandoned him as cursed cowards. The NSA soldiers deserved this abuse for their behaviour. But the relationship between the NSA and ourselves was not damaged by this affair.

The battle of the Dongning county town was significant not only because we killed several hundred enemy soldiers. The important point was that after going through this battle the NSA had full confidence in the Korean communists. The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was able to act in east Manchuria as proudly and legitimately as before while flying a red flag. This battle implanted the true image of the Korean communists in the minds of the NSA soldiers.

Afterwards the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units would of their own free will beat those who attempted to harm our unit.

"September 7, 1933 is the day when I was born again. My life from that day was bestowed on me by Commander Kim, while my life until then was bestowed on me by my parents. I owe him my life; the AJPGA is the first brother of our national salvation army." These were Shi Zhong-heng's words when he regained consciousness.

His words spread a legendary tale to every corner of Manchuria, the legend that the AJPGA was a paragon of noble, self-sacrificing spirit and loyal comradeship.

On our way back from the Dongning county town to Luozigou, a journey of a hundred miles, I was constantly at the side of Brigadier-general Shi. All through the first day, we carried him on

a stretcher. Even though they saw their commander was being carried by the guerrillas, the NSA soldiers dared not approach the stretcher and only watched him from a distance. His aide-de-camp and some of his men asked us to hand over their commander to them, but the guerrillas refused, and sent them away.

When his aide-de-camp approached our column for the third time, I ordered my men to hand over the stretcher. I persuaded the guerrillas by saying that the men had consciences, so they might feel sorry for their mistake, and even if we only granted the right to carry the stretcher, they would be able to atone for their crime to a small degree.

When we handed Shi Zhong-heng over, the NSA soldiers bowed to us graciously. Brigadier-general Shi greatly regretted the behaviour of his men, and he apologized to us as a commanding officer for his subordinates' misbehaviour.

"I am ashamed in front of you, Commander Kim, for these creatures of no account. It is because I have not educated them properly, so please blame me if you will, and have mercy on my men."

I was moved by his regarding his men's shame as his own. I would not have been so deeply moved had he given vent to his anger against his men or felt even a little bitterness against them. He was indeed a generous, fair-minded soldier. I said:

"As the Chinese proverb has it, even a sweet melon hangs on a bitter stalk. A man cannot always be perfect nor a flower be beautiful for a thousand days. You have regained consciousness

following a serious wound, and we are satisfied with that."

"Another Chinese proverb says that if a man wants to buy a horse he should study his teeth, and if he wants to make a friend he should know the other person's mind. I will take it as a godsend that I made your acquaintance, Commander Kim, and treasure the gift for all my life."

Shi Zhong-heng, a dozen or more years older than I, became my blood-bound comrade-in-arms as we worked to establish the anti-Japanese allied front. After the battle of the Dongning county town he moved his unit to Xibeigou near Macun. We frequently visited each other as one visits relatives, and deepened our friendship.

I sent him various medicines for the treatment of his bullet wound, and exposed him to communist influence in an attempt to transform his ideology. As a result, he joined the Communist Party and became a commander of the people's revolutionary army.

He fought well in the anti-Japanese joint operations at Luozigou in June 1934, and rendered highly distinguished service as commander of the 2nd Independent Division after his unit was incorporated into the people's revolutionary army. In every battle he would lead the charge at the enemy's positions with a Mauser in his hand. This led his men to believe that he was the bravest commanding officer in the world. The soldiers of the other NSA units also respected and adored him. Quite a few of them transferred to Shi Zhong-heng's unit.

He was fatally wounded in the abdomen while leading a charge at the battle of Laosongling. The bullet did not pass through him,

lodging in the intestines. He went to the Soviet Union to have the bullet removed, but breathed his last there. When I heard others were mourning his death, I remembered him with aching grief.

Chai Shi-rong, who had joined us in the anti-Japanese front amid the flames of battle in the Dongning county town, was later transferred to the people's revolutionary army, becoming vice-commander and then commander of its 5th Army Corps. He made great efforts to maintain friendly ties with us when he was fighting under Zhou Bao-zhong in north Manchuria. I kept in close touch with him even as late as the early 1940s.

When the allied front between the AJPGA and the NSA had apparently become too strong to break as a result of the battle of the Dongning county town, an unexpected incident occurred which threatened to damage it.

The root cause was a remark by Wu Yi-cheng in praise of Jiang Jie-shi. After returning to Luozigou we held a joint meeting to review the battle. Wu Yi-cheng spoke first. Speaking about the victory of the combined forces in the battle, he suddenly began to extol Jiang Jie-shi and went on to say that the anti-Japanese war in the northeast of China would only be brought to a triumphant conclusion when Jiang sent guns and reinforcements from the south. This provoked the guerrillas to anger.

Paek Il Phyong, who was there as the commander of the Hunchun guerrilla unit, took the floor and accused Commander Wu, who had praised and supported Jiang Jie-shi, of being a reactionary, asking how Jiang could possibly assist and lead us

when the whole world knew that he was a running dog of imperialism.

In a blaze of anger Wu had him arrested and threatened to have him shot.

At this point, Paek's men rebelled. They protested: we did not lose a single rank-and-file guerrilla during the battle, and it is not logical to lose our commanding officer for the sake of the allied front; how could we possibly return to Hunchun after losing our commanding officer? we must save Comrade Paek Il Phyong even if it means fighting with Wu Yi-cheng to the last man of our unit. They were about to dash out with rifles in their hands.

The NSA soldiers had taken their rifles and were preparing to fire back.

In this hair-trigger situation a single gunshot would result in wholesale deaths and the disruption of the allied front which had cost so much effort. Wu Yi-cheng turned pale and pursed his lips.

I jumped up on the platform and argued with both sides, in Korean and Chinese, and tried to reason with Wu Yi-cheng:

"You may feel angry, Commander Wu, but be generous and set Paek Il Phyong free. It was most presumptuous of him to call you a reactionary, and impugn your dignity, but you, too, must think this matter over. Will others listen willingly to your praise of Jiang Jie-shi when the whole China condemns him as a puppet of the imperialists? It was he who kept telling Zhang Xue-liang not to fight against Japan before the September 18 incident. If you kill Paek, the whole of Manchuria will call you a traitor to the nation,

so please give the matter deep thought."

As I finished my speech, some of the NSA soldiers asked themselves, "Who is that man? Is he from the south? A delegate from the Kuomintang?" Others answered, "From the south? No. He is Kim Il Sung, the commander of the guerrilla army."

"I spoke as I did out of ignorance, please do not regard me as the same kind of man as Jiang Jie-shi," Wu Yi-cheng said, and declared he would withdraw his order to have Paek killed.

However, two days later he still had not released him. The rank-and-file soldiers of the NSA accused their commander of foolhardiness, saying, "Why does not Commander Wu keep his promise to Commander Kim?" Some of Wu's men said, "Everything will be alright if we do not shoot him. Can he kill any man he wants?" Another said, "Our national salvation army will be cursed if we kill him."

While the masses of the soldiers were agitated in this way, the officers lodged letters and petitions with Wu Yi-cheng, urging the release of Paek Il Phyong. Paek was released from detention by Wu after 3 days.

The process of cementing the allied front with the Chinese nationalist army units was beset with many such painful incidents; perseverance and sacrifice were required. How could the two "organisms" with the different blood types be effectively combined without difficulties and distress?

For three successive days the enemy cremated the bodies of the

soldiers who had been killed in the battle. Meanwhile, we lost Hu Jin-min. He was killed by an accidental shot on our way back to Luozigou.

4. A Comment on Ultra-Democracy in the Army

The Soviet line was a Leftist tendency in the establishment of government; military ultra-democracy was a Leftist ideological tendency which occurred in the command and administration of the army. It advocated absolute equality for every soldier, irrespective of his rank, in the command and administration of the army. In other words, it advocated excessive equalitarianism in all aspects of military activity, regarding it as an absolute.

It was while we were directing the guerrilla army on our return to Wangqing from the campaign in south Manchuria that we first encountered the practice of ultra-democracy in the guerrilla army. At that time the tendency was at an incipient stage, and its effects were not serious.

As I acquainted myself with the work of the guerrilla army on my return to Wangqing after the battle of the Dongning county town, I realized that the ultra-democracy which had barely been germinating had now assumed definite weight in the command system of the army and was paralysing that system.

The alarm was first raised concerning the danger of ultra-democracy in Dahuanggou, Hunchun County, in the autumn of 1933. Dahuanggou was a central guerrilla zone in Hunchun. Pan, the inspector from the Comintern, was murdered there by Pak Tu Nam. At the same place, 13 soldiers of the Hunchun guerrilla unit who had fought in the Dongning county town were all killed in a single incident, bringing grief to all the people in east Manchuria.

A group of guerrillas who had returned to the guerrilla zone after the review of the battle held at Luozigou broke the fatigue of their journey for a while at a solitary house, celebrating *Chusok* or the day of the Harvest Moon. They relaxed the following day and the day after that, with a guard posted. A Japanese garrison discovered them and surprised them by surrounding the house by night.

The wisest thing to do in such a situation would have been to strike at the enemy's weak point and quickly fight a way through the enemy's encirclement. To do this the commander needed to judge the situation properly and make a prompt decision. But the company commander had no right to make a decision. One of the men was O Pin, an experienced soldier, but his words carried no weight because he had been demoted by the Leftists from the post of head of the military department of the county party committee to a mere soldier.

The Leftists who were in the higher levels of the leadership of the party bodies in those days did not allow the commanders the right to make a decision on military affairs. They maintained that

everything concerning military operations must always be discussed at meetings and decided collectively, on the principle of majority rule. This became an iron rule which no one could ever break in the command and administration structures of the army, binding the commanders hand and foot. This abuse of democracy in military affairs weighed so heavily even on able commanding officers that it produced a state of functional paralysis.

Even at the critical moment when the armed enemy was tightening his encirclement in order to destroy them, they continued their nonsensical argument over whether to stand and fight the enemy or break out of the encirclement. Some sensible men insisted that they should fight, and not continue their empty talk until they were all destroyed, but the ultra-democrats declared that no military action should be taken without a decision of the meeting.

This was nothing short of criminal suicide for the besieged guerrillas. While they continued their futile argument, the enemy fell upon them. Only then did the guerrillas stop arguing and begin fighting. The enemy fire mowed down 13 guerrillas.

Only a few of them escaped death by a miracle. One of them came to Wangqing at O Pin's request and told me the details of how the 13 men had been killed.

Paek Il Phyong and O Pin were among the dead.

The soldier from Hunchun told me that, as he was elbowing his way through the heap of dead bodies, O Pin, with his intestines tumbling out of a wound in his belly, had said with his last breath:

"I have no right to order you, but I am telling you as a party member to report this incident to Comrade Kim Il Sung without fail."

I cursed the advocates of ultra-democracy and the dogmatists who had blindly followed them in battle. Had it not been for the obstacle of this ultra-democracy, the Hunchun company could have broken the siege and averted such tragic losses.

These 13 comrades are still fresh in my memory; they had shared life in the shadow of death with me in the Dongning county town. As we were withdrawing from the town after the battle, they had come over fresh from their blocking mission, shaken my hands, set me on their shoulders, and tossed me in the air, saying that the Wangqing company had fought well. At the memorial service for the fallen comrades they had cried bitterly as they made speeches.

I felt my heart choked at the news that these men of such burning passion and love had all been killed in one night.

Of these 13, O Pin was the most unforgettable. He had been introduced to me by Chae Su Hang when we were building revolutionary organizations around the six towns in the northern frontier region of Korea. While Chae was attending the Taesong Middle School in Longjing, O Pin had attended the Tonghung Middle School in the same town. Both schools had produced many figures of social importance and independence fighters. They had participated in the student movement together in Longjing. O Pin, together with Chae Su Hang, had attended the Kongsudok meeting

and the winter Mingyuegou meeting which we convened. They had taken an active part in the discussion of the policy on the armed struggle.

It was probably in May 1931, that O Pin and Chae Su Hang guided me to Jongsong, the birthplace of Chae. My first step on Sinhung village after crossing the Tuman River with them on a smuggling boat is still as vivid in my memory as if it happened yesterday. Drinking in with profound emotion the beautiful verdure on the willowy bank and the ancient scene of the old castle site, we talked at length about the future of the motherland.

In the spring of that year, outside the north gate at Sinhung village, I met O Pin's father, O Ui Son, who was the head of the Anti-Imperialist Union in Jongsong. He had been eking out a living by sharecropping in Chatiaogou, Yanji County; when his son became a career revolutionary he had moved to Sinhung village with his family, and his house soon became a secret liaison point linking the AJPGA in the Wangqing area with all the underground revolutionary organizations in Jongsong County in the homeland.

Every time I went to Sinhung village, O Pin's family served me noodles. We spent the *Tano* festival or the fifth day of the fifth lunar month at this house in 1933. On that occasion O Ui Son went to a market in Phunggye, eight miles away, to buy buckwheat flour, and he made buckwheat noodles for us for lunch, noodles that reminded me of Pyongyang cold noodles.

One of the many things I still cannot forget is that we struck an

artesian well in the yard of his house that day, to relieve the family's suffering from a shortage of water. I worked with the spade as hard as if I were O Pin, who was then fighting in Hunchun.

When I met O Pin at Luozigou before the battle of the Dongning county town, I said that his father in Sinhung village had served us buckwheat noodles for the *Tano* festival. When he heard this, his pleasure was evident. Even though he had been demoted to a soldier from the post of military department head of Hunchun County, he was not in the least disaffected or dispirited.

As I encouraged him not to lose heart, he said, "I am in high spirits, as you can see. My demotion cannot make me Kim Pin or Pak Pin. Nevertheless, I do not feel like working in Hunchun any more. I am thinking of moving to Wangqing after the battle, if my superior permits it. What do you think of the idea?"

I answered, "I will be happy if you come to Wangqing. But remember that there are a lot of Leftists willing to brand people as 'Minsaengdan' members in Wangqing, too."

"Is that so?"

"The Leftist wind never dies away in Wangqing."

"But I think I should feel light-hearted beside you. In any case, I shall come to Wangqing, come what may. When I say something I stick to it."

When we attacked the fort in the west of the town, he led the line of advance with a grenade in his hand. He was highly commended for this at the meeting to review the battle.

When the units were parting with one another at Luozigou after the meeting he reaffirmed his firm intention. His resolve to come to Wangqing was unshakable. He said his determination had been strengthened when he saw the guerrillas from Wangqing capturing the fort and charging into the town during the battle. Naturally I promised him my full cooperation.

However, the sad news of O Pin's death reached Wangqing before I could keep that promise. Ri Kwang had been murdered in the spring, and Pan, the member of the provincial party committee, had been killed in the summer; today O Pin had gone to the world of no return without realizing his long-cherished desire.

The sad news of the death of 13 warriors including O Pin came as a bolt from the blue. Ever since then I have shuddered at the mention of ultra-democracy in military affairs, and never tolerated the slightest tendency towards it in our ranks.

This tendency was so repugnant to me because it was utterly destructive of revolutionary practice.

We still regard it as an absolute principle that all questions concerning military operations must be discussed by Party organizations and welcome that the creative opinions of the masses must be incorporated into the planning of military operations via the Party organizations. But we do not tolerate the encroachment of this principle of collectivism on the authority of the commanding officers who are in charge of the administration of their units.

In the early days of the war against the Japanese, however,

ultra-democracy, on the excuse of collectivism, limited the authority of the commanding officers and paralysed the command system in the administration of military units and conduct of operations.

In those days, in order to stimulate the creative energy of the party members there were party group meetings, branch meetings and committee meetings at all levels in the guerrilla army when military operations were being planned or during a battle, and there were also unit meetings similar to the general servicemen's meeting nowadays. The principle was to consider every aspect of the situation.

For all this, the Leftists, who regarded ultra-democracy as being as absolute as Napoleon's code of laws, maintained that all military matters, irrespective of their importance and the prevailing circumstances, should be discussed at party bodies of all levels and at unit meetings.

Suppose the revolutionary army was to attack a town. They discussed the plan first at a party group meeting, using a sketch map of the town without its name, deciding whether or not it was necessary to attack it and, if it was necessary, in what way, before a resolution was adopted.

When the need to do battle and the possibility of victory was confirmed at the meeting and a detailed plan of operations was mapped out, the same process was repeated at a branch meeting.

The same procedure was followed at the unit meeting, except that this was also attended by non-party members. They said: "We

are going to attack a certain town, the attack will bring us great political and military benefits with no losses or few casualties, the plan of operations is such and such, we will surely emerge victorious if we fight in accordance with this plan." Then they passed a decision, issued battle orders and attacked the town.

Such meetings, which proceeded with agenda improvised as suddenly as a stone thrown into a lake, involved endless arguments, about the pros and cons of every possibility, before conclusions were finally reached. The right to an equal vote required by ultra-democracy resulted in time-consuming uproarious arguments involving everyone.

Operational plans which had gone through different meetings at different levels turned out to be useless as the enemy situation changed in the meantime. And when such an operation was undertaken the changed situation resulted in a heavy toll of the forces of the revolutionary army.

The death of the 13 courageous men at Dahuanggou was a glaring example of the influence of ultra-democracy on military affairs.

Another expression of this abuse of democracy was the striving to establish excessive equality and impartiality in the revolutionary army.

Such abuses were also witnessed in the units under my command.

One day, with Kim Myong Gyun, head of the military department of the county party committee, I paid a visit to the

barracks of the 1st company to learn about its work. I found the company commander sweeping the yard and its political instructor chopping firewood with his men in a corner of the yard. I smiled at the laudable sight of officers working in harmony with their men.

For some reason, however, the sight left Kim Myong Gyun cold.

"I'm pleased to see the commanding officers setting an example," I said, but the department head still seemed unimpressed. "Well, what about joining them?" I said, approaching a besom lying in a corner of the yard.

Kim Myong Gyun tugged gently at my sleeve, saying, "Let me show you an amazing sight."

He ordered the duty officer to summon the company commander and political instructor immediately.

The officer answered, "Now is the morning cleaning time."

"Bring them here as you are ordered and no more idle talk!" Kim Myong Gyun demanded with no more ado.

The officer's response was not soft, either. "Then the company commander and political instructor will be criticized at the unit meeting."

I casually asked Kim Myong Gyun what the officer's answer meant. He replied, "It means that the company commander and political instructor must do the cleaning, setting aside everything else, when the soldiers are cleaning, for they are equal human beings."

This incident occurred when ultra-democracy was still at its

incipient stage. This blind idea of equality was soon put into practice by the guerrilla army, and it paralysed its command system for some time.

It is needless to say that of course every man, and every soldier, is equal as a human being. But in the revolutionary army–the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army or the Korean People's Army–every soldier is given different assignments in accordance with his duty. One man is designated company commander, another man platoon leader and another squad leader.

The various duties and assignments performed by soldiers place them in the relationship of superiors and subordinates in the revolutionary army, a company commander being superior to his platoon leaders, a platoon leader to his squad leaders and a squad leader to his men. The service regulations of the revolutionary army stipulate that subordinates shall obey the orders of their superiors without reservation. Otherwise it would be impossible to command the army and maintain iron discipline.

The service regulations of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army fully reflected the collective opinions of the soldiers and required the commanding personnel to abide by the regulations willingly.

However, the Left opportunists ignored the relationship between superiors and subordinates stipulated in the service regulations of the AJPGA, and this inflicted serious damage on the living tissue of the AJPGA, whose lifeblood was discipline, order and unity between the officers and men, and it undermined the army's moral basis.

Ultra-democracy in the army was an expression of ultra-egalitarianism. It even produced the unsavoury practice of soldiers not respecting the superiors they had elected, speaking impolitely to them or disputing their orders on the excuse of equality.

An army in which subordinates do not salute their superiors, speak to them impolitely, or dispute their orders and instructions, is no longer an army. It is a rabble. Can one ever expect from such a rabble the noble comradeship and unity of ideology and purpose that encourage men to shield their commanders from danger and the latter to protect their men at the risk of their own lives? Can one ever expect from it the steel-like unity that enables them to speak with one voice, walk with the same gait and breathe as one?

Ultra-democracy in military affairs also required that a commander should do exactly what his men did in battle. The proverb, "Horns on the head, rosary beads on a string," states the simple truth that everything has its place. In other words, a commander and his men have different duties to perform in battle. A suckling infant is capable of understanding this.

Ultra-democrats in the army, however, preached that the commanders should fight in the front rank both in attack and defence, unafraid of death. This sermonizing made it impossible for the commanders to perform their duties properly. Commanders who were duty bound to study the combat situation from the best vantage point all the time and command the battle from a broad viewpoint, had to move about in the rank and file. That was why they were unable to control their units in accordance with the

situation.

Certainly, a commander sometimes needs to take his place at the head of the attacking men, or to inspect the trenches and encourage the men by going through fire. When his personal example is required to change an adverse situation into a favourable one, he must, of course, stand in the front rank and encourage his men to destroy the enemy. But doing this in every situation is not the correct way to set an example.

When summing the results of battles in those days, commanders who moved in the front rank of the attacking formation, away from their command posts, were always extolled. Men would compete with one another in praising their commanders–one saying that his platoon leader did not fear the hail of bullets as he stood on the hill, commanding the battle, another boasting that his company commander jumped into the enemy's trench several metres ahead of his men, and another bragging that no battalion commander could be braver in fighting the enemy hand to hand than his battalion commander.

In this climate, the adventurist tendency to plunge, single-handed, into the enemy's position became endemic among the platoon leaders, company commanders and battalion commanders of all guerrilla units in east Manchuria, the very commanders who should have maintained the positions defined in the battle regulations, calculated the general development of the battle and determined their forces' future course of action. This tendency led to the deaths of many platoon and company officers, the basic unit

commanders of the guerrilla units, in the early days of the war against the Japanese.

A great number of these single-handed heroes were produced in Wangqing–men such as Kim Chol, Kim Song Hyon and Ri Ung Man. Kim Chol and Kim Song Hyon fell while leading charges in battle, and Ri Ung Man was wounded in the ankle while leading the fighting from the front.

Choe Hyon and Jo To On in Yanji were master-hands at the bayonet charge, famous throughout the whole of east Manchuria. They even carried out reconnaissance missions themselves, instead of sending their men. They were innocent adventurers, as naive in their actions as schoolboys, rather than military commanders.

Jo To On was a famous adventurer produced by the Yanji guerrilla unit. He was so good at whistling that from the early days the people in Yanji called him by the nickname of "Whistling Jo." Wherever he went, his nickname attracted the people's attention.

Even when his hair was grey and he had long given up whistling, he used to be known as "Whistling Jo," an expression of people's affection for this veteran who always braved the hail of bullets at the head of his men during the war against the Japanese. He became so accustomed to the nickname throughout his life he felt uncomfortable when he was called by his real name.

Once a visitor knocked at his door and asked, "Is this the house of Comrade Jo To On?" He answered bluntly, "Not Jo To On, but 'Whistling Jo.' " This reply embarrassed his visitor, but it showed how fond he was of the nickname his comrades-in-arms had given

him during the anti-Japanese war.

If he had been alive, I would wish to recollect him by his nickname which was so popular among the masses.

Jo To On did not know how to write even his parents' names; only when he was much older than school age did he learn how to read and write the Korean alphabet, as well as studying the multiplication table and a *Children's Reader*. As soon as he was able to read and write, he became a member of the organization and the guerrilla army and then developed further to shoulder the heavy responsibility of a company commander. This company commander would go himself to reconnoitre enemy strongholds within sight, come back to his company, issue orders for a raid, and then dash like hurricane in the vanguard of the attack.

When he had captured several rifles at one time after reconnoitring and raiding positions of the enemy's self-defence corps in broad daylight, the Leftists gave wide publicity to his distinguished deed at various meetings and in the official papers. But this was one-sided propaganda which gave no consideration to the fact that Jo was a commanding officer who should have refrained from such adventures. However, as a result of that propaganda he became famous as a soldier throughout almost the whole of east Manchuria.

He was seriously wounded in the battle of Dadianzi while rushing at an enemy machinegun emplacement at the head of his unit. He was so near the machinegun that a bullet which hit him in the belly emerged diagonally from his back. His life was saved by

miracle, but he had to live in hospital for six years because of the wound he received. He was unable to return to his beloved company.

He was bedridden while the anti-Japanese armed struggle was developing to the level of victorious, large-unit operations over wide areas in south and north Manchuria and the homeland. The Korean People's Revolutionary Army became a legendary army known to the whole world and its just struggle became a beacon of light to the oppressed peoples of the world. This war required efficient commanders and veterans capable of directing new regiments and divisions. If he had not been disabled, Jo To On could have rendered tremendous service when the war against the Japanese was at its triumphant high tide.

The Leftists refused to pay attention to the safety of commanders until the distorted concept of democracy was finally eliminated from the army; it was only some time later that guards were organized in each of the regiments and divisions to protect the commander.

The abuse of democracy in the revolutionary army was also expressed in the indiscriminate use of reward and punishment. The anti-Japanese guerrilla army had a system of reward and punishment designed to strengthen its fighting efficiency. We rewarded soldiers who were exemplary in combat, training and everyday life, and punished those who seriously violated the service regulations, applying various standards according to specific merits and demerits.

Ultra-democrats, however, disputed this system by arguing over why one comrade was awarded the first prize, and another the second prize, when they had both performed the same duty in the same squad, over why somebody was only given a reprimand and somebody else was given a warning when they had committed the same mistake; thus they bolstered opinion in support of indiscriminate application of regulations and brought pressure to bear upon us.

This surrealistic attitude undermined the basic aim of a system of reward and punishment. In short, ultra-democracy was a pernicious ideological trend that ran counter to our aspirations and efforts to foster the military, political and moral superiority of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army and advance the anti-Japanese armed struggle towards ultimate victory. If we had not eradicated this ideological trend in good time, all the commanders of the guerrilla army would sooner or later have been reduced to mere figureheads, and the guerrilla army to a lawless collective in which there was no distinction between the commanders and the rank and file, and ultimately to a rabble disarmed by itself.

Ultra-democracy, no matter what specific forms it took, was an opportunist trend derived from petit bourgeois ideology. It was, in effect, an anarchic tendency which had nothing in common with the revolutionary ideology of the working class.

Anarchism, a reflection of petit bourgeois ideology, derives from an extreme hatred for authority in general and a resistance to the political power of the bourgeoisie in particular. It attempted to

introduce anarchic disorder and immoderate conduct into society, extolling ultra-democracy, radical freedom and self-indulgence.

Some radical ideologists, who represented the distress of the petit bourgeoisie, which was economically bankrupt and politically disenfranchised under the pressures of capitalist mass production and the political dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, attempted to lead the masses in opposition to state power in general by alleging that the political power of the capitalist class should be overthrown by violence and anarchism established.

The so-called "theory of anarchism" of such ideologists as the French petit bourgeois, Proudhon, and Bakunin and Kropotkin in Russia, which found expression in an extreme hatred for political power and unreasonable demands for social equality, was a destructive ideological trend which made it impossible to rouse the working masses to the struggle against the repression of the capitalists, to safeguard the gains of the revolution and establish truly popular and democratic systems in those countries which had overthrown the dictatorship of the exploiting class; it was condemned by the impartial judgement of history.

Nevertheless, for some time this ideological trend gave the petit bourgeoisie illusions about ultra-democracy and unrestricted freedom and it spread to some extent to the regions and countries where capitalist industry had not been developed on a large scale and the petit bourgeois and peasant mentality remained dominant. This is the major reason why quite a few people thought that anarchism made certain contributions to the struggle against

capitalism.

Some working-class parties enlisted anarchic forces in the struggle to overthrow the reactionary regime of the landlords and bourgeoisie. It is well-known that the Soviet government cooperated with Makhno and his clique, an anarchic collective in the Ukraine, during the Civil War.

In the early days, when ultra-democracy emerged in the guerrilla army, anarchism still existed as a political idea that served a certain social stratum, the petit bourgeoisie in particular, as an expression of their revolutionary character, and it inflicted tangible harm on the revolutionary theory and practice of the working class.

This does not mean, however, that the only form taken by ultra-democracy was anarchism. The activities of the revisionists who emerged in the international working class movement also had elements in common with ultra-democracy. Under the cloak of democracy, they promoted bourgeois liberalism, anarchism, immoderacy and disorder, and they gave rise to social confusion and self-indulgence. In the light of this experience, we cannot but conclude that there is an ideological community between extreme bourgeois democracy and anarchism.

If ultra-democracy finds its way into the military sector, it will eventually produce anarchic confusion. Had it not been eliminated from the guerrilla army before it was too late, ultra-democracy could have irretrievably damaged the process of building up the guerrilla army and its military operations, and could have seriously

hampered the overall development of the revolutionary movement.

When we were involved in combatting it, with the firm determination of wiping it out, a meeting of commanders and political commissars of the guerrilla units in east Manchuria was convened in Shiliping to review the work done in the year and half since the guerrilla zones had been established and to take measures to defend these zones from the enemy's large-scale "punitive" operations.

I met Kim Il Ryong and Kim Jong Ryong at this meeting. The former was the commander and the latter the political commissar of the Antu guerrilla unit. The meeting was also attended by Jang and Cha Ryong Dok, commander and political commissar of the Helong guerrilla unit, and Ju Jin, Pak Tong Gun and Pak Kil, general commander, commander and political commissar of the Yanji guerrilla unit. Some comrades also came from the Hunchun guerrilla unit, but I cannot remember who they were.

This meeting also discussed measures for overcoming the ultra-democratic tendency in the command and administration of guerrilla units.

We maintained that the main factor in the command of a guerrilla unit was the authority of its commander and the establishment of rigid discipline and centralization, that the method of administration should give priority to political work. At the meeting I stressed the following points: The distinctions between the superior and the subordinate in a unit should be clear and absolute. A commander should be steadfast and positive in

executing the orders issued by his superior and unswervingly carry out a decision once he had made it. He should always take the initiative in commanding and act with determination, without wavering or hesitating in complicated and difficult circumstances. But this on no account means that he may resort to subjectivism and arbitrariness in commanding. He must know how to draw on the energy and wisdom of the masses in executing the orders of his superiors and in the command of battles. He should not command his unit only by means of orders, but engage the soldiers' conscious enthusiasm by giving priority to political work. Today's war is not like wars in the days of slave-owning and feudal societies, when one contended for victory on a solitary horse; it is a modern, people's war in which the army and people fight as one. The outcome of a war is decided by the ability to allow fuller scope to the enthusiasm and creativity of the army and people. This requires that political work should be given definite precedence. Party meetings, unit meetings, explanations and propaganda by agitators are powerful means for political work. Commanders should therefore make effective use of these means.

I criticized the Hunchun guerrilla unit for its mistake in Dahuanggou and warned the representatives from the guerrilla units in all counties of the harmfulness of ultra-democracy in military affairs, showing that it had led to the loss of 13 guerrillas.

Our younger generation might not easily understand or believe the episodes I have briefly mentioned here, or the childish nature of the infantile disorder of ultra-democracy as demonstrated in

these episodes. But these are the true facts.

The infiltration of this malady into the guerrilla army in the early days of the armed struggle was a trial for those of us who bore the heavy burden of defending the guerrilla bases and creating the allied front while also being responsible for administering the army.

At the meeting we stressed once again that guerrilla units should be commanded and managed in accordance with the principle of individual responsibility on a basis of democracy.

After the incident in Dahuanggou two contradictory tendencies appeared in the guerrilla units. One supported the enforcement of one-man management system with a single commander, and the other insisted upon continued adherence to the democratic principle in army administration. These two positions each had merits and demerits.

Rendering the one-man management system absolute might give rise to arbitrariness and subjectivity in the command and administration of the army, while making democracy absolute might deprive the army of promptness and efficiency in its command and management. So I proposed the principle of one-man management system based on democracy for discussion. According to this principle a commander's responsibility to command and administer his unit was based on a decision made by the party organization following collective discussion. Collective discussion based on democracy would enable complex and difficult military tasks at each period to be carried out

satisfactorily by exploiting the masses' collective wisdom, whereas the one-man management system based on the discussion would enhance the commander's sense of responsibility and role in accordance with the military requirements, the prerequisite for which was a high degree of promptness, determination and concerted action.

We also stressed the need to establish iron discipline in the guerrilla army by maintaining a well-regulated system of command within it. A commander's orders are not an expression of individual opinion; they are an expression of the democratic and organizational opinion of the body of a higher level. Military orders possess legal force and a commander is responsible before the law for the orders he has issued. The rank and file should never in the least degree discount or dispute orders; they are duty bound to execute them promptly and without fail, whatever the circumstances. Commanders should command and supervise the carrying out of their orders in an appropriate manner.

We also discussed the tasks of creating a sound ideological atmosphere in the units and of consolidating revolutionary unity between the superiors and subordinates by intensifying the study of communist ideology and the struggle against such petit bourgeois ideologies as the infantile equality and anarchism pursued by ultra-democracy in military affairs.

The meeting at Shiliping enlightened the commanders of the guerrilla army. In the subsequent trials of repeated battle ultra-democracy was eliminated from the army once and for all.

Had we not completely overcome ultra-democracy in the army in the early days of the anti-Japanese war, we would not have been able to consolidate the invincible ranks of the Korean People's Army in such a short period of time after liberation, nor would we have emerged victorious in the fight against the international allied forces of imperialism headed by US imperialism.

It is now a matter of course that our People's Army contains neither those who insist on unprincipled equality and impartiality nor those who dispute their superiors' orders. The soldiers answer their superiors' orders only by saying, "I understand!" Our People's Army is a collective of loyal soldiers who live in a spirit of unity of superiors and subordinates, unity of army and people, a spirit of constant self-reliance and fortitude from the day they take the oath of the military code of conduct to the moment they are discharged from the service.

If anyone wishes to know our soldiers' attitude towards democracy, he need only understand their militant slogan, "When the Party decides, we do everything!" If he wants to see the genuine features of unity between superiors and subordinates manifested in the deeds of our soldiers, he need only learn of the last moments of Heroes Kim Kwang Chol[4] and Han Yong Chol[5], who had sacrificed their lives for the sake of many of their comrades-in-arms.

Ultra-democracy was liquidated a long time ago, but it must still be guarded against.

We safeguard democracy but oppose ultra-democracy; we

maintain equality but we regard ultra-egalitarianism as taboo, because both of these extremes invite revisionism. There are quite a number of people on the Earth who are anxious to see our style of socialism corrupted by the filthy germ of revisionism. Our people and the People's Army therefore never tolerate the infiltration of our ranks by revisionism. We do not want our Party to be reduced to a club or a market-place by the tendency of ultra-democracy. The suffering inflicted upon us by the evils of ultra-democracy in military affairs during the anti-Japanese war and the lessons of Eastern Europe cry out to us that we must not allow this.

5. Operation Macun

An epidemic of fever broke out in the guerrilla zone in the autumn of that year. This acute disease, with the symptoms of chill, high fever and rash, swept through the valley of Xiaowangqing. I, too, fell ill and was confined to my bed in Shiliping. I learnt later that this illness was an eruptive typhus.

The younger generation nowadays does not know what this disease is like, for they live in a land which has long been free of epidemics.

But when we were waging the armed struggle in the mountains 60 years ago, the people in the guerrilla zone went through untold suffering from epidemics. Since thousands of people lived in the relatively small valley, epidemics of various kinds would break out. The enemy's "punitive" forces would attack frequently, creating havoc as they pursued people from hill to hill, so we could not improve the unsanitary conditions and take appropriate measures to prevent epidemics, even though we wished to. All we could do was to stretch a straw rope across the gate of the house of people who had been affected or paste a warning notice on the

wall: “Off limits. An epidemic site.”

This was the worst possible trial for us–an epidemic raged at the same time as the enemy hurled thousands of troops against us day in and day out, in a do-or-die attempt to eliminate the guerrilla zone. To make matters worse, I was ill and many of the leadership were pale with worry over the fate of the guerrilla zone.

They sent a platoon leader, Kim Thaek Gun, together with his wife and about a platoon of soldiers to guard and attend to me. When the other units went out to fight, these guerrillas remained behind to defend Shiliping. Mr. and Mrs. Kim had been living in Yehe in north Manchuria and had moved to Wangqing by way of Muling, determined to participate in the revolutionary struggle in east Manchuria.

In addition, Choe Kum Suk, the Wangqing county party committee member for women’s work, stayed in Shiliping, on assignment from the party committee to nurse me.

At first I received medical care in the front room of the house of a woman called Chun Ja. Her husband, Kim Kwon Il, had been the secretary of a district party committee and later worked as the secretary of the county party committee.

Whenever the enemy attacked the guerrilla zone, Kim Thaek Gun would carry me on his back from valley to valley to seek shelter.

As the enemy’s “punitive” operations intensified, they carried me deep into a valley in Shiliping along a water course, and built a hut for my shelter under a huge steep rock, difficult for the enemy

to assault. One could only approach it by means of a rope hanging down the rock. Here I recovered completely thanks to the ministrations of the three people tending me.

These unforgettable individuals snatched me from the jaws of death. But for their diligent nursing, I would not have survived in the valley of Shiliping. I was so ill that I lost consciousness several times. I was told later that each time I slipped into a coma, they would shed tears, and cried, “For goodness’ sake, pull yourself together. What shall we do if you are so ill?” And when Kim Thaek Gun was out looking for provisions, Choe Kum Suk would support me as we wandered in search of a shelter. It is no exaggeration to say that I only recovered thanks to her help.

I had received much assistance from Choe since the early days after my arrival at Wangqing. When I had arrived at Macun from the campaign in north and south Manchuria, she was the member of the party committee of district No. 2, Dawangqing, for women’s work. At that time Ri Sin Gun had been in charge of the women’s association of the county. Whenever Choe came to Ri to discuss their work, I would often see her at Ri Chi Baek’s house. They were on intimate terms, as close as sisters. Ri Sin Gun praised her greatly for having a fast hand at writing, to which I paid no heed at first. I simply wondered how fast she could write. But I was surprised when I saw the minutes of a meeting she had taken. The contents of the speeches delivered at the meeting had been recorded in full. Modern stenographers are said to write fast, but I have not seen one who could compare to her. She could file away

all the discussions we had in a single night. We let her record the proceedings of important meetings.

She was as magnanimous as a man and warm-hearted; and at the same time, she was a woman of principle, faithful to the revolution. She would have hauled a boat over a sandy beach if I had asked her to do it. I sent her to the enemy-controlled areas on several occasions on various missions, and she worked efficiently there.

As a woman, she sympathized very much with me for having lost my parents. She took the same loving care of me she would have taken of her own younger brother, and I called her "sister." She would visit me before anybody else whenever I returned from the battlefield, slipping into my hands something she felt I needed. Sometimes she would sew up tears in my clothes and knit wool into underwear for me. If she did not come to Lishugou for a long time, I would go to see her. We were so much like brother and sister that we would laugh and joke when we met. When she met old people in the village, she would address them in the dialect of Hamgyong Province. The words she used were funny and her intonation was even more interesting. Even when I mimicked the way she spoke and carried the joke too far, she did not get angry, but simply smiled. But broad-minded as she was, she would not accept jokes about her being pretty.

If I said she was a beauty she would explode, saying that I was making fun of her. I enjoyed it when she pounded me on the back with her fists, so I would joke and call her a beauty in spite of her

awkward feelings. In fact she had a cherubic face, though she was not a woman of great beauty. But to me, women such as Choe Kum Suk in the guerrilla zone were much nobler and prettier than the girls and ladies in the big towns. I thought no women in the world were more beautiful than those in the guerrilla zone. Even though they lived year in and year out among powder fumes, without once making up their faces, they did not complain nor became bitter; they simply devoted themselves to the revolution. I thought they were most beautiful. No doubt it was this attitude of mine that led me to call Choe Kum Suk a pretty girl. In those days I would spare nothing to make the women in the guerrilla zone look much more beautiful.

We often found face powder, cream and other cosmetics among the trophies we had captured. At first, when they saw these articles, our guerrillas would throw them into a stream or trample on them, saying that they were things used to make the faces of Japanese jades beautiful. For some time I did not interfere in the way the aromatic, high-quality trophies were disposed of. For I thought they were useless. Our women in the guerrilla zone did not paint their faces in those days. They all shared the view that to smell of face powder or perfume was a sin. Some women made up their faces once in a long while on holidays, but when they came to gatherings, they would take seats in the back corners, feeling sensitive to the others' views. I regretted this. I thought it painful that they should live a hard life with their faces stained with soot and ashes, smelling of powder fumes all the year round and not

making up their faces even once. So I said to the guerrillas, “None of us must throw away cosmetics from now on. We have women among us, our women in the guerrilla zone. Where on earth are there women more wonderful than our woman guerrillas and women’s association members?”

The soldiers replied in one voice, “You are right. There are no women in the world more wonderful than our women in the guerrilla zone. They did not go to the enemy-controlled area, but have shared their lives with the guerrillas for a year and a half, even though they are bereaved of husbands, children and lovers by the ‘punitive’ atrocities, live on herb roots and tree bark and shiver with cold out in the open in unlined clothes in the dead of winter. We feel ashamed and regret that we Korean men have not made it possible for them to dress in silks and paint their faces with rouge and lipstick so that they could show themselves off to the world. Let us send them all the best things we have captured, even though we don’t eat enough and are poorly-clothed. Let us allow them to powder their faces if there are cosmetics.”

One day we captured cosmetics from the enemy and took them to Choe Kum Suk to give to the women’s association members. She was tremendously excited at the sight of a bundle of cosmetics. From that day the smell of face powder began to hang in the air in the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone. When I went to a club to enjoy a performance of the children’s art troupe on one holiday, I could smell face powder and cream there.

Only Choe Kum Suk did not make herself up even after several

days had passed. I was concerned, and I asked her why she did not. She only smiled instead of answering. There seemed to be some reasons I did not know. So I asked Ri Sin Gun what the reason was, and was told that Choe had given her share of cosmetics to a women's association member in Shiliping.

Later, we attacked the enemy behind his lines and again captured plentiful cosmetics. I gave some of them to Choe Kum Suk, saying that she should not give them to others this time, but make up her own face, for I wished to see her face powdered. She promised me that she would do this in gratitude to me for capturing the cosmetics at the risk of my life.

A few days later on my way to Shiliping to give guidance to the work of Choe Chun Guk's company, I saw Choe Kum Suk, the head of the women's association of Dawangqing, sitting looking very smart at the edge of the River Dawangqing, looking down at the water with her back turned to the road. I got my orderly, Ri Song Rim, to inquire why she was there. From a distance I saw the orderly approach and salute her. Then, all of a sudden he split his sides with laughter for some reason. Curious, I walked over to them quickly. No sooner did I reach the edge of the stream than Ri stopped laughing and pointed at Choe's face with his finger, "Comrade Commander, look at her face."

I could not help smiling myself. Her clean, good-looking face was spottily painted with rouge and cream. But Choe only looked up at us without understanding what was the matter.

"Your face has become a world map, auntie," Ri said.

"Oh, my!" Choe Kum Suk exclaimed, and she plumped down and began to splash water on her face. Clumsy painting is no cause for guilt or shame, but she was totally at a loss, as though she had done something shameful. On a laundry stone close by I saw a puff-box and cream case I had sent to her a few days before.

I realized she had no skill at making-up and was very clumsy at it. But how could I make fun of that? She was making up her face for the first time in her life. Worse still, she had no hand mirror. So she had carefully put rouge and cream on her face as she looked down at her reflection in the water. It was neither surprising nor funny that she painted her face like a map of the world.

As Ri Song Rim approached her to tease her once again, I waved my hand to check him. If he had said a few words more at that time, she would have broken into tears and fled.

I am sure that women who make their faces up with high-quality toilet articles in front of full-length mirrors or at dressing-tables with triple mirrors every morning, will sympathize with Choe Kum Suk when they read this part. I have heard that nowadays it is the fashion for girls who get married to take a dressing-table with triple mirrors with them among their personal belongings. This is material proof that our women wish to make their life more abundant and civilized.

But in those days when we had to eat gruel mixed with vegetables and lie out on the frozen earth, fighting desperate battles to defend the guerrilla zone, only a few of the women in Xiaowangqing had hand mirrors, and they could never dream of

dressing-tables. So they went to the riverside, as Choe Kum Suk did, if they wanted to make themselves up.

That day I did not reproach Ri Song Rim for ridiculing Choe's make-up skill, but I chided myself for not having paid attention to obtaining mirrors for the women in the guerrilla zone. Our sympathy for them was nothing when compared to the affection they had for us. Our love for the people could in no way surpass the infinite affection with which they had supported us and attended on us.

This was the case with Choe Kum Suk. She nursed me all the time with a warm affection and sincerity worth many times more than the confidence I had placed in her. When my illness took a turn for the better, she ran to Tumen 25 miles away before going anywhere else. Tumen was a trading centre for a range of Korean produce. She bought a bundle of Korean pears and apples there and returned to Shiliping.

I was moved to tears to see them. I even suffered from the hallucination that my mother in the world beyond had transformed herself into Choe Kum Suk and was giving me her love. It was indeed a love that only one's own mother or sister could give.

Inhaling deeply the fragrance of the fruits of my motherland which she had put in my hand, I said, full of gratitude, "Sister, how can I repay your kindness?"

"What kindness? If you are so eager to return it, then take me round the sights of Pyongyang after the liberation. I have heard Pyongyang is the most beautiful place in the world." Her reply was

half serious and half joking and yet somehow very earnest.

"Never mind. I am sure I can make your wish come true. Neither of us must be killed, but fight on in order to set our feet on the soil of Pyongyang when the motherland is liberated, sister."

"I shall not die. But I always feel uneasy for you, for you don't take care of yourself."

In order to tempt my appetite she obtained some sesame pounded in a mortar and mixed it into my dishes and gruel. She took pains to serve me with delicious fatty foods, saying that I had fallen seriously ill through lack of nourishment. She made the utmost effort, but everything was scarce or running short at that time.

Kim Thaek Gun caught minnow in a stream and boiled them in soy sauce or broiled them to feed me. He would catch 70 or 80 of minnow a day. He was not only enthusiastic, but very skilful at fishing.

Ashamed of serving only those fish at every meal, Choe went to the village and got noodles. To the guerrillas who inquired after my health, she said, "The Commander must recover as soon as possible, but the trouble is that there is nothing to feed him, it upsets me to prepare his meal everyday from the fish caught by Thaek Gun, but the Commander says he enjoys eating them."

On hearing this, those members of my unit who were master-hands at fishing caught a sackful of fish with dragnet one day and came to visit me. Choe Kum Suk prepared it in various ways and produced a dish for every meal. When I got a little better, she told

me I had continually called out the name of a woman she did not know when I had been in a coma and she mimicked it; it was a joke she had invented with Kim Thaek Gun's wife. It was quite absurd, but I was convulsed with laughter for the first time since I had fallen ill. Looking back upon it now, I see it was laughter through tears. I was well aware of that they were playing the fool in order to cheer me up after being bedridden for so long.

Choe Kum Suk's care of me even included telling me a false date to prevent me going back to Macun before I recovered completely. Whenever I came round from a coma, I asked her how long I had been unconscious, and each time she would reduce the real period. For instance, if I had been in a coma for two days, she said it was two hours and if it had been five days, she would say five hours. After recovering completely, I added up the days from what she had told me and thought that only ten days had passed since I fell ill. I felt quite relieved to hear that.

The lie she had told me was exposed when Choe Chun Guk came to visit me. This honest political instructor could never tell a lie. He told me that I had been bed-bound for a month. She reproved innocent Choe Chun Guk for his tactlessness, but I immediately gathered myself and returned to Macun.

A mountain of information was awaiting me at headquarters. The data illustrated various aspects of the Japanese imperialists' moves to bring Jiandao under their rule.

During the month I had been ill, the enemy had completed the preparations for winter "punitive" operations. High-ranking

officials dispatched from the Japanese Cabinet had come to Jiandao and reached a final decision on the plan for winter "punitive" operations against the guerrilla bases in east Manchuria, after discussing the matter with the brains of the army, gendarmerie, police and diplomats in the field. The issue had even been discussed at a Cabinet meeting in Tokyo.

At meetings the Japanese imperialists held to discuss the problem of Manchuria, they claimed that "Operations for public peace in Manchuria must begin with Jiandao!" They asserted that the conquest of Jiandao was inseparably linked not only with the great cause of building up the puppet Kingdom of Manchukuo but with the security of the frontier of the Empire of Japan; its conquest was therefore a matter of great urgency for the sake of Manchukuo as well as of Japan herself. They also alleged that this campaign should be blessed for the sake of the future of the great Kingdom of Manchukuo and that the commander of the Kwantung Army, whose mission it was to invade the Soviet Union, should supervise the police institutions in Manchuria and that its provost marshal, charged with the control of the army, be in the forefront of the conquest of Jiandao.

After rigging up Manchukuo the Japanese imperialists had adopted several important measures to maintain public peace in the area. They committed a division of the Kwantung Army to "punitive" operations as a replacement for the Jiandao task force, established an armed constabulary in each county, and established a secret service, judiciary police and industrial police; in this way

they made the police structure three-dimensional and expanded it on a large scale.

Associations for the maintenance of public peace were organized throughout Manchuria as joint consultative organs of Japan and Manchukuo for the liquidation of insurgents and the pacification of public opinion. Each province and county was a unit, in addition to the centre; furthermore, various spy organizations emerged and stretched out their tentacles towards the communist camp. Through the introduction of the collective security system which had existed in China in the old days and which had proved effective for Japan in the maintenance of public order in Taiwan and Kwantung area, the Japanese and Manchukuo police bound the people hand and foot. Large-scale colonization by armed Japanese immigrants who were reserve soldiers and the expansion of the self-defence corps forces helped to check the anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese forces which had deep roots in the three provinces of northeast China. The Japanese imperialists empowered local secret-service policemen engaged in the work with rebels to execute them on the spot.

All of these measures showed what painstaking efforts the Japanese imperialists had exerted to dominate and retain the colony of Manchukuo. A particular headache for them was the armed struggle in the Jiandao area, waged by Korean communists who struck at the face and back of the Empire in the northeastern corner of China, and the full-scale national liberation movement of which this struggle was a mainstay. It was no exaggeration when a

Japanese provost marshal said that the conquest of Jiandao would be 90 per cent achieved if the Korean communists' activities were suppressed. The so-called great Empire of Japan was so afraid of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and the guerrilla zones, its strongpoints. The Japanese imperialists therefore made frenzied attempts to eliminate the anti-Japanese guerrilla zones in east Manchuria at any cost.

In the summer of 1933 the military authorities of Japan recalled to Korea part of the Jiandao task force which had suffered heavy casualties from the attacks of the AJPGA and dispatched in its place the Hitomi unit and many other crack troops of the Kwantung Army to various parts of east Manchuria. The main forces of their occupation army in Korea were concentrated in the northern frontier region of our country, so that they could be promptly committed to "mopping-up" operations in the guerrilla zones. Large armed forces–over ten thousand men in all–encircled the guerrilla zones in Jiandao and began winter "punitive" operations.

Directing his main effort to the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone, where the General Staff of the Korean revolution was situated, the enemy hurled against this area forces of 5,000 men from the Kwantung Army, the puppet Manchukuo army, the police and self-defence corps. The density of the enemy's troop dispositions in this battle has never been surpassed in any war except the wars of pre-modern days in which the belligerent armies contended for victory in square formation, and the battle fought in Lushun (Port

Arthur) during the Russo-Japanese War, since the advent of skirmish-line warfare. The enemy even put his air force on alert. Special detective teams supervised by the Jiandao secret service were also dispatched to the areas surrounding the guerrilla zones.

Thus the whole region of east Manchuria became the field of the most fierce and bloody battle between the Japanese imperialists and the Korean communists. It was more a final showdown than a battle for the defence of a few guerrilla zones.

The guerrilla forces in Xiaowangqing were only two companies. Worse still, food reserves were low there. The guerrilla bases in east Manchuria found themselves in a critical situation that threatened their very existence. No one in the guerrilla zone was optimistic enough to believe that the two companies could defeat the powerful enemy armed with guns and aircraft. We were caught between two alternatives–fighting to the last man or abandoning the guerrilla zone and surrendering to the enemy. We chose to fight to the last.

According to the principles of guerrilla tactics, the best thing to do was to avoid a showdown. But if we did not fight, the enemy would swallow up the guerrilla zones on the Tuman River in a single gulp. If we did not defend these zones the revolutionary masses who had been enjoying genuine equality and freedom under the care of the people's revolutionary government would be frozen, starved and shot to death in the dead of winter. Furthermore, the people would no longer look up to us.

The autumn scenery of Wangqing was magnificent, but it was

about to be ruined by the furious storm of the winter "puntive" operations. All of the guerrilla zones turned to us in tense anticipation. The people's countenances brightened or clouded depending on the soldiers' expressions.

I began to look for some ingenious scheme, but none occurred to my mind. There was no man at my side with whom I could discuss tactical problems. Pak Hun, a graduate from the Huangpu Military Academy, was absent; Kim Myong Gyun, *xiaogezi* (little man–Tr.), who had served in the Soviet army for some years, and Ri Ung Gol, a graduate from a military academy of the Independence Army, had disappeared after being accused of being members of the "Minsaengdan."

Ryang Song Ryong, too, had fallen a prey to the "Minsaengdan" nonsense.

I even thought how happy I would be if such a famous general as Hong Pom Do was with us. Hong was a Righteous Volunteers' Army general who had won a brilliant repute on the soil of Wangqing. The brilliant victories the Independence Army had won at Qingshanli and Fengwugou could be said to be the brainchild of Hong Pom Do. Some people belittled him by saying that he was a general who fought with an intuitive knack, without any strategy, but that was nonsense. What they had described as a knack was in the final analysis the product of strategic genius.

When he was alive, my father often said that Hong Pom Do was a man of remarkable resources. Had he not been a resourceful man, he would not have dealt such a telling blow to the Japanese

army on the Gaoli Pass by employing skilful ambushes so cleverly and prudently. Those who could not discern the intelligence concealed beneath his woodcutter's appearance, should not have claimed that they knew him. Many years had passed since this commander-in-chief of the Korean Independence Army, who once had had the area around Haerbaling under his thumb, concealed his whereabouts. His image seemed to be fading from the people's memory with the passage of time. My distressed mind was tormented by a yearning for help from my forerunners.

As I was struggling day in and day out with the problem of strategy in the log-cabin of the headquarters, the old man Ri Chi Baek called on me with a pot of honey one midnight.

Holding out the pot to me, he said, "I am sorry that I did not give you anything when you were suffering from fever. Please take this honey to help you recover."

"Wild honey is worth its weight in gold. You did wonders to obtain it."

"Old man Ma who lives at the entrance of Hwanggarigol got it. A few days ago he boasted that he had collected some wild honey, so I went to see him. He gave me the whole pot, saying he would sell even his house to obtain anything that was helpful to your health. I am on my way back from his house now."

I felt my heart overflow with gratitude for their consideration.

"Thank you very much, but I am young. You should take this honey."

"Please do not decline the kindness of old man. I have suffered

constant regret for not nursing you. You look haggard beyond description, Commander."

He pulled at my sleeve, suggesting that we take pot luck at his house. I followed him without objecting. A meal with him was welcome, but I was more interested in spending a night in the house still scented by the presence of Pan. Even though I had moved my lodging, I left a large share of my affection with the generous, kind-hearted family who had taken care of me as warmly as if I was their own son.

We ate corn gruel mixed with kidney beans and pumpkin as a midnight snack. The food tasted sweet, perhaps because I had just recovered from my febrile disease. The hostess, Mrs. So Song Nyo, was well aware of my likes and dislikes in food. The most notable food she used to treat me to was potato and maize roast. The potatoes in the Jiandao area were large and the year-old ones contained a lot of sugar. Such roasted potatoes with turnip pickle soup tasted wonderful on a day when it was snowing heavily.

After the snack I lay beside the old man in the room where Pan had stayed.

The old man could not sleep for some reason; he kept sighing continually. I thought he was yearning for his son who had passed away a few months before. His son, Ri Min Gwon, had been severely wounded in an attempt to disarm Guan's unit when it was about to surrender to the enemy in the spring of 1933; he had died while undergoing treatment in a hospital in Qiuyuegou. I myself participated in the ceremony held in the memory of Ri Min Gwon.

In September 1932, a memorial service for the guerrilla, Choe Yun Sik, was held in this house.

"Why do you keep sighing all night long, father?"I asked him, pushing aside the quilt and turning round on the bed to face him.

"I cannot go to sleep. How can I sleep in peace when I have heard that thousands of the enemy are encamped at the entrance to the guerrilla zone? They say that the guerrilla army will be crushed in this 'mopping-up' operation. What do you think, Commander?"

"It is a false rumour spread by the reactionaries. But if we don't make full preparations, the guerrilla zone will collapse in two or three days. Frankly speaking, the destiny of the guerrilla zone is hanging in the balance. So I cannot sleep, either."

"It makes no sense for the guerrilla zone to be destroyed. How can we live without this zone? We would rather kiss the dust or give up the ghost."

"You are quite right. If we are to die, then we must fall in this guerrilla zone. But what should we do? The enemy numbers thousands, and our army defending Xiaowangqing is no more than one hundredth of the size of the enemy."

The old man puffed nervously at a cigarette and spoke in a serious tone of voice, pushing his pillow in front of my face, "If you are short of soldiers, I will become one for you. There are quite a few old men like me in Xiaowangqing who know how to fire a rifle. They will be able to fight much better than the Kanghwajin guard corps if each of them is given a rifle. I think there are rifles and ammunition that the Independence Army

soldiers buried somewhere near Zhongqingli where we lived before. If you can find them, you can surely arm the hunters and the old men who were Independence Army soldiers in the old days as well as the young people like my son-in-law, Jung Gwon, who is busy with some kind of youth work. Everyone should become a fighter and fight to the death fight. If we have no rifles, we must defend the guerrilla zone by clutching the enemy's throat and giving him a belly throw."

At the time when I was in despair over the disparity between our forces and the enemy's, his remark suggested to me that the only way out of the impending difficulties was an all-people resistance. I felt confident that we could seize the initiative in the fight if we fought a death-defying struggle in every quarter, by enlisting not only such paramilitary organizations as the self-defence corps and the Children's Vanguard, which I had intended to use to man the front line with the guerrilla army, but also the unarmed people. The defensive battle at Xiaowangqing would have to be a battle between the enemy's army and every soldier and civilian in the guerrilla zone, rather than a battle between the enemy's army and the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. We could also count on the support of the people from the semi-guerrilla zone.

This talk with Ri Chi Baek encouraged me. I thought, "He is right. When the people say they will fight and they can win, they mean what they say. Victory in war depends on the will of the people and on how efficiently one enlists them."

Thus I received my first inspiration while listening to the calm

voice of an old man who represented the opinion of thousands of people in the Wangqing guerrilla zone. The plan of operations we were mapping out had without fail to contain the people's will as expressed by the old man Ri.

I resolved that the defensive battle we were going to wage at Xiaowangqing should be made an all-out fight fought by all the people, young and old, men and women, in the guerrilla zone. This definition of all-out resistance was an expression of our supreme confidence in the people in the guerrilla zone, who had been sharing life and death, weal and woe, with the army for the past two years. The significant period for which fighting itself had been our routine in the guerrilla zone allowed me to feel such confidence. The guerrilla zones could not have remained strong for two years after their establishment through the efforts of the army alone. One factor was the efforts of the people, who had played a considerable part in building up the army and defending the guerrilla zones. When we fought a hard battle with the enemy, who was ten or a hundred times stronger than us, we felt strong when we had the people in our rear. When we sensed their breath as they ran along the trenches, bringing hot water and rice balls, our combat efficiency increased a thousand times.

This faith in the people's strength underlay my decision to fight an all-out battle and my plan of battle. This determination conformed to the people's will to become an integral whole with the army under all circumstances and their determination to live in the guerrilla base, if they were to live, and die there if they were to

die. An all-out effort by the people, when enlisted, would be a formidable force.

This was the reserve force of the guerrilla army suggested by the old man, Ri Chi Baek. But in fact the people of the guerrilla base were not a mere reserve force; they were a most reliable component of the main force.

We reaffirmed the tactical principles of attacking and destroying dispersed enemy forces by concentrated initiatives and of dispersing and harassing the enemy behind his lines when he came under attack from concentrated forces. We then called on all the people in Xiaowangqing to offer all-out resistance.

In response to the appeal, all the organizations and social strata turned out as one for the preparations for the decisive battle. The self-defence corps and young volunteers' corps advanced to the defensive position together with the guerrilla army and the young and middle-aged men without weapons piled up rock barricades on the steep heights along the line of defence. The famous hunters Jang, Choe, Ri and others from Wangqing came to Macun, formed a hunters' corps with the veterans of the Independence Army, and then took the field. The women's stretcher teams and cooking units also went on the alert. Children set spiked wooden planks in the roads along which the enemy's convoy was expected. The infirm and small children were evacuated to safe places.

We made full preparations for the fight in the determination not to follow in the footsteps of the Independence Army under the northern political and military administration, which had fled,

deserting Wangqing. We would rather fall in battle.

Wangqing had witnessed not only the victory at Fengwugou but also the bitter grief of the ignominious defeat suffered by the Independence Army under the northern political and military administration which retreated, leaving its compatriots to suffer unspeakable "punitive" atrocities.

In south Manchuria there had been an Independence Army organization called the western political and military administration; there had also been the northern political and military administration in the area around Xidapo, Wangqing County, in east Manchuria, which was expanding the area under its military influence with So Il as its president and Kim Jwa Jin as its commander-in-chief. It was said that the patriotic fighters affiliated with the administration numbered 500, and the organization had had one million rounds of ammunition as well as funds amounting to 100,000 *yuan*. The cadet-training school (military academy) run by the organization in Shiliping had been a considerable size; it could accept more than 400 cadets. The processions of animal-drawn convoys carrying supplies of straw sandals and provisions contributed by the peasants in Wangqing and its vicinity to the political-military administration used to stretch back as far as Xidapo. This army, in cooperation with the Korean Independence Army of Hong Pom Do, had once annihilated a large force of the Japanese aggressors' army at Qingshanli.

When Kim Jwa Jin, in grey serge uniform, with a sword at his side, passed by on his white horse with bluish mane, the people in

Wangqing, men and women, young and old, used to bow deeply, as if they were greeting the cortege of the Prime Minister or the King of feudal Korea. They did this to express their gratitude to the Independence Army for the victory at Qingshanli. But at the news of the imminent massive "punitive" attack on Jiandao by the Japanese army, the renowned General Kim Jwa Jin and his men had vanished, without offering the slightest resistance. Unaware of this, the Wangqing people had gone out on the road to have a look at the commander-in-chief, Kim Jwa Jin.

Only one company remained. For some reason this company had attended the graduation ceremony at the Tongil School just prior to the "clean-up" of Jiandao. In accordance with custom the school had prepared a sumptuous feast for the grand graduation ceremony. As soon as the ceremony was over, the soldiers had given three hasty cheers for independence, sat at the table and wolfed down unrefined liquor, rice cakes, cold noodles and other food. When the "punitive" forces arrived, they all fled. The pupils and their parents, too, had scattered in all directions. The scene was said to have been like a disturbed anthill. The "punitive" forces had shot, bayoneted, and slashed with swords the defenceless people who were running helter-skelter for their lives. The Independence Army under the northern political and military administration had been routed. The people in Wangqing lamented over the sudden ruin of the army which had seemed so impressive.

If such a tragic event were to recur in the land of Wangqing, where power was in the hands of the people, we would not have

the face to claim that we were the sons and daughters of Korea.

We decided to strike at the enemy by employing elusive tactics–ambush, allurement, surprise attack and night storming–as guerrilla warfare required. We had evolved these guerrilla tactics ourselves in the course of defending the guerrilla zone from the enemy's repeated "punitive" offensives.

In the early days, when the Korean communists defined guerrilla warfare as the basic form of armed struggle and began to put it into effect, we had known practically nothing about tactics. We could have referred to the experiences of others and their manuals if they had been available, but we could not find them. So we sent a man to the Soviet Union to obtain some reference materials on war, including the combat experience of the Civil War; they had been of some help to us in understanding the concept of guerrilla struggle and the method of organizing ambushes and surprise attacks, but they had not been suitable for our actual situation.

As a first step to writing a manual of guerrilla warfare in our own style, I finished writing a pamphlet after the battle at Jiapigou at the end of March 1933. The pamphlet was titled *Guerrilla Actions,* and it brought together the initial military experience we had gained in our armed activities in the space of more than one year.

The pamphlet dealt with fundamental matters, ranging from the guerrillas' spiritual and moral qualities to the general principles of guerrilla warfare. It also codified all of the principles and methods,

ranging from the organization of guerrilla combat actions such as raid, ambush, defensive battle, march and bivouac, to guerrilla skills such as firing, handling weapons and discipline. Needless to say, this was not a great book of military science such as Sun-tzu's *Art of War* or Clausewitz's *On War.* But in the situation at that time, when we had neither renowned military theoreticians nor veterans of armed struggle, the pamphlet was a valuable handbook, representing the simple theory of our own style of guerrilla warfare. The officers and men of the guerrilla army studied it until it became dog-eared from being carried in their rucksacks, and they tried their best to apply the regulations specified in it to their military practice.

Guerrilla Actions, together with the *Guerrilla Manual* which was published later, provided prototypes for the establishment and development of our revolutionary armed forces and Juche-based tactics.

On November 17, 1933, the enemy attacked the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone from three directions in combined operations of infantry, artillery and air force. The descendants of the Samurai fell upon the guerrilla zone like angry wolves, growling and threatening to bite at everything, even at the trees standing there. These wild invaders seemed intent on swallowing up the land of Wangqing at a single gulp.

The hordes of "punitive" troops crawled in waves over the frozen ground, their aircraft continually bombing Macun and Lishugou where the military and political headquarters were

located. The enemy's tactics had become more brutal. Previously, when frustrated in his attack he used to retreat to his camp and then resume his onslaught. But now he did not retreat even when his advance was checked, but stayed at the point he had reached, consolidating the line he had established before advancing again, step by step. Employing this murderous tactic, he destroyed every life and burnt down everything he came across.

However, our army and people heroically defended the guerrilla base in unbreakable unity.

The fiercest of the battles was fought on Mt. Ppyojok and the outpost in the Ssukpatgol on Mt. Mopan, the gateway to the guerrilla zone. The 3rd company and the Anti-Japanese Self-Defence Corps manning these mountains mowed down the attackers with a surprise barrage of gunfire, grenades and rocks when the enemy had advanced to within 20 metres. The enemy attacked tenaciously in waves, but failed to penetrate the line of the outpost. The defenders on Mt. Mopan destroyed the enemy's highly mobile cavalry that was outflanking the defence at a bend of the River Dawangqing.

As the enemy committed large forces in the successive waves of attacks on Mts. Ppyojok and Mopan, we switched from an all-out defensive to a war of attrition, employing flexible manoeuvres mainly designed as enticements and feints, in combination with positive defensive actions. This was a uniquely flexible tactic for destroying the enemy forces continuously by employing a variety

of combat actions, and not allowing the enemy a moment's breathing space by constantly drawing him into engagement on our own initiative. Had we clung to a stereotyped defence, and not employed mobile tactics in good time, the guerrilla army would have been routed by the enemy's tenacious attacks based on numerical and technical superiority.

In line with our new tactics, the guerrillas, along with the members of the paramilitary organizations, withdrew from the outposts; they lured the enemy deep into the defensive zone and crushed him with constantly-switching tactics–ambush, sharp-shooting, raiding the enemy's campsites and burying bombs in the bonfire.

Bombs could be buried in bonfires even by small boys, and the effectiveness of the measure was assured. Whenever we moved from one position to another we made sure that bombs were buried in the bonfires. As soon as the enemy soldiers reached the deserted position, they would gather around the campfires to warm themselves. Then the bombs would explode, blowing up the enemy. O Ryong Sok, the fourth younger brother of O Paek Ryong, working with the women of the self-defence corps, killed the enemy by this method at the central sentry post on Mt. Ppyojok.

We also organized frequent night raids on the enemy's camps. Raiding parties of two to five guerrillas would infiltrate the enemy's position, scatter leaflets to disillusion the enemy forces and fire a few shots before returning. Three or four shots fired at

the enemy's tents or his campfires would transform his entire camp into bedlam. Such raiding parties were sent three, four, and even five times a night. The enemy soldiers were unable to sleep all night; they trembled in fear and shot at random among themselves. The enemy was so scared by our constant raids that war lunatics began to appear among his ranks. Some enemy soldiers surrendered to us after reading such leaflets as "Appeal to the Japanese Soldiers!" and "Appeal to the Puppet Manchukuo Army Soldiers!" scattered by the guerrillas.

Hunters armed with matchlock rifles, also fought. Though they were old, their marksmanship was marvellous. Their admirable skill in shooting only enemy officers could be compared to that of modern snipers. The members of the women's association rushed to and from the trenches with rice balls and hot water on their heads. Children until 10 years of age came to the battlefields and beat drums and blew trumpets to boost the men's morale.

A conspicuous feature of Operation Macun was the showers of rock blocks from outpost positions, like those on Mt. Ppyojok. These piles of rock would roar down upon the attacking "punitive" forces, killing and wounding them en masse. The thunder of a rock-slide down on the steep slope and the clouds of dust like gunsmoke struck terror into the aggressors' hearts. This method also proved very effective in halting the advance of the enemy's cavalry, vehicles and artillery.

One of the heroes shown up by these battles was a guerrilla with a nickname of "13 bullets." He had been known in the

Wangqing area as an adventurous young man since the time when he had captured rifles from a tax office on the Tuman River on assignment from the YCL organization. When he arrived at the office he had said, "How are you, panjandrums? I am a Korean young man, a member of the Young Communist League." He introduced himself, then took out a revolver and took down three rifles hanging on the wall without any great hurry. Then he rang up the police station and shouted, "What are you doing over there? There's a communist here. Come over here quickly, all of you." The police station had hastily dispatched mounted policemen to the site of the incident. He had returned, only narrowly escaping being killed. He had repeated similar adventures afterwards. I do not need to describe here the kind of criticism he received from the YCL organization.

This young man performed a great feat at the post in the valley of Ssukpatgol, a feat worthy of being recorded in the annals of the anti-Japanese revolution. A ten-man blocking party had been stationed at the post at all times. The head of that party was none other than this young man, "13 bullets." He was the platoon leader and was also in charge of the YCL group in that party. A large "punitive" force consisting of Japanese and puppet Manchukuo soldiers and self-defence corps men, surrounded the valley under cover of darkness one night and started attacking the post. The blocking party was involved in heavy fighting from dawn. They repelled the enemy's charge seven times until one corner of the log-cabin that was serving as a post had been burned down.

Calling a YCL group meeting in the thick of the battle, the young man said, “Comrades, behind us is the guerrilla base and our beloved brothers and sisters. If we fall back a single step from here, we will have no right to live in this world as young Koreans. Let us hold out to the last, even though it costs our lives, even though our bodies are torn to pieces!”

The blocking party members, ablaze with hatred, fixed bayonets to their rifles in order to fight hand to hand with the enemy. “13 bullets” was keen to fight in that way as well. But he calmed himself, in order to carry out his assignment. This brave fighter, who had been criticized for his self-opinionated attitude and adventurism, had grown into a seasoned commanding officer who could control and regulate himself in bloody battles.

When we reached the valley with reinforcements, he was lying at the post with 13 shots in his body. Hence his nickname–“13 bullets.” Members of the blocking party had been wounded in seven, three and two places. They were given the nicknames of “seven bullets,” “three bullets” and “two bullets.”

The people in Wangqing called him “13 bullets” instead of his real name. I also called him by his nickname. Eventually his real name faded from the people’s memory. It is annoying that I cannot remember his real name. But I draw comfort from the fact that the nickname he earned in the anti-Japanese war will have a more lingering effect on the minds of the readers than that his real name would have.

The battle became heavier as the days went by. People were

evacuated from Xiaowangqing which had been reduced to ashes by the gunfire of the Japanese army to Shiliping. The enemy killed everybody who came into their sight–soldiers and civilians, young and old, men and women. Hundreds of people were killed in Xiaowangqing during the winter "punitive" operations. When we were fighting in front of a lumber camp at Wucidao in Shiliping, a Japanese army unit, which had passed a sentry post disguised as refugees, fired a machinegun at the backs of people who were moving from Macun to Dawangqing. This raid alone cost us scores of casualties. The enemy surrounded the village of Duchuanping in one night and killed all the sleeping people with volleys of machinegun fire. The family of Paek Il Ryong, a secretary of a district committee of the youth association who was a skilled playwright, were all killed. A great number of children in Xiaowangqing were killed during the "punitive" operations of that year.

When the situation in the guerrilla zone was at its worst, the refugees in the valley of Lishugou numbered more than 1,500. The guerrillas went to indescribable lengths to evacuate them to Dawangqing. Sometimes the procession of refugees moving to Dawangqing would be cut to pieces by a surprise attack from the enemy; then, they would wander about the woods the whole day trying to find one another. At that time I covered the evacuation of the revolutionary masses all day long, carrying babies in my arms. Other guerrillas, too, helped the old and the sick, while carrying on fighting. This heartbreaking picture was the initial point of unity

between our army and people of today. It was a picture painted in blood and tears.

When I look back upon the scene of that day as we took the refugees from Lishugou to Shiliping, I feel a lump rise in my throat.

Many of the refugees had not eaten cereals for 20 days because of the enemy's "punitive" operation; they ate bean pods and dried turnip leaves for their meals. In Shiliping for lack of cereals they boiled cowhides and ate them.

If we show our younger generation the "foodstuffs" the people in the guerrilla zone ate during those years when they were too hungry to lift up their heads to see the sun in the sky, they will not be able to hold back their tears at the subhuman starvation their forerunners suffered.

Kim Myong Suk (from Yanji) lost her two children and she herself came within an ace of death, for she had not yet recovered from the period of spring food shortage before the barley harvest. As she had not eaten anything for a whole week, she could not think of burying her children outside, even though she saw them starve to death with her own eyes; she lay in the hut without moving, for she had no energy to sit up. Her neighbours came and managed to pull the bodies of her dead children away from the hut and bury them in fallen leaves; they, too, had eaten nothing for a whole week and were too weak to dig graves. When she ate boiled rice for the first time after her return to her liberated motherland, Kim Myong Suk wept, recollecting

the spring famine in the guerrilla zone which deprived her of her two children.

In the Chechangzi guerrilla base there was a man who, in the battle at Yulangcun, had been wounded by eight machinegun bullets, his skull being split open to reveal his brain, but had miraculously survived. His tenacious grasp on life earned him the nickname of "eight bullets." Later he, too, died of starvation while working in the government office at Dongnancha. On his deathbed, he said, "If I had died when I was wounded eight times, I could have been remembered as a hero. How lamentable it is to die here of hunger!"

The enemy besieged the guerrilla zones and starved the people to death or drove them out to freeze to death.

The Korean people endured unbearable trials in those years. The sacrifices imposed upon them still rankle as unhealed wounds in the heart of our nation.

The rulers of Japan are under a moral obligation to reflect upon the crimes they have committed in Korea and Manchuria. Repentance implies neither shame nor humiliation. It is a process of self-reform by means of reason in the effort to approach perfection. They may close their eyes, but time will never erase the facts of history. Japan must remember that her high rate of growth, the economic bed of roses in which she glorifies, is stained with the blood of the Korean nation. Japan, also, has experienced a national disaster in lives which were lost under foreign fire, and her beloved daughters were raped by occupation troops, hasn't

she?

In spite of the heavy losses he suffered having invaded the guerrilla zone, the enemy tenaciously attempted to prolong the battle in order to make us die of cold and hunger, by denying us reinforcements and fresh supplies of weapons and provisions.

Effecting a decisive turn in the tide of battle was the only way we could save the army and the people in the guerrilla zone. Striking the enemy hard and harassing him behind his lines, together with continued efforts to destroy him within the defensive area was the only way we could save them.

Ever since my arrival in Wangqing, I had been opposed to the tendency that had restricted us to the defence of the guerrilla zone. In other words, my idea was to raid and destroy the enemy by concentrating efforts when the enemy's forces were dispersed, and at the same time to disperse ourselves and harass the enemy in many places behind his lines when he was already under concentrated attack. This was called the tactic of avoiding the enemy where he was strong and attacking him where he was weak. Only then could we defend the guerrilla zone and preserve our forces.

Most of the party cadres in the county and east Manchuria, however, insisted that we should concentrate our efforts in defence when the enemy was attacking us by massing his forces against the guerrilla zone, to save the guerrilla zone and the people.

These differences in opinions regarding a tactical issue resulted in a serious argument as to which of the opinions was in

accordance with Marxist principles. They contended that my opinion was not an expression of Marxism but of escapism and capitulationism, while I asserted the correctness of the tactic of harassing the enemy behind his own lines.

I said that our forces, no matter how concentrated, would never be equal to the enemy's forces, so we should evacuate the population, and leave only a part of the guerrilla force to shoot at chosen points, while the rest of us should disperse and harass the enemy from behind; for instance, ten guerrillas equipped with rifles could take 30 or 40 unarmed young men with them to strike at the enemy from behind at his weak points, then they would be able to capture weapons and provisions.

Many comrades judged the situation correctly and supported me.

But some bigots would not listen to me. Boasting of seniority based on so-called activity, they said, "Young men should listen to experienced people. How is it conceivable for the army to leave the guerrilla zone when the enemy is falling upon us? This idea means deserting the people in order to save the army."

When the guerrilla zone had been reduced to ashes and many people had been killed in a short space of time, I met Tong Chang-rong, Ri Sang Muk, Song Il and other cadres of the ad hoc committee and county party committee, and insisted on conducting harassing operations behind the enemy lines.

"Things have reached a dead end. If we go on in this way, not only we, but also the people, will all be killed. Where can we

retreat? If we retreat deeper into the mountains as we are doing now, there will be no houses and no food in the forest. Retreat will get us nowhere. You seem to think that you and the guerrillas can directly repulse the enemy, but that is hopeless. We should divide the guerrilla army into three or four groups and send them into the enemy-controlled area tonight. If we hit a few of the enemy's bases from behind, the 'punitive' forces will surely retreat from Xiaowangqing."

Hard battles were also being fought in other guerrilla zones in east Manchuria. The people in Hunchun were driven towards Jinchang and Huoshaopu, the people in Wangougou were driven towards Dahuangwai and Sandaowan, and the people in Helong towards Chechangzi. Even when things had come to this pass, some of the leadership hesitated to make a decision.

So I asserted once again the idea of harassing the enemy from behind and declared that I would fight according to my own decision because the army was under my command. Then I assembled the guerrillas and said, "We must not only hold on, but strike the enemy from behind. Who will go to fight behind the enemy lines? Any of you who will follow me, come along! I don't need many, only half of you, and the rest must stay here to protect the people. Those who want to go with me, must break the siege tonight. If we break through, we'll survive. If we attack the enemy bases and strongpoints one after another, the people will spread the news. Then the 'punitive' forces which are attacking this valley will fall back, afraid of being destroyed from behind."

The guerrilla army was thus divided into two groups–one, under the command of Choe Chun Guk, defended Shiliping, and the other, under my command, went to the enemy-controlled area. The YCL members evacuated 1,500 people from the guerrilla zone to Luozigou.

We gave Choe Kum Suk the assignment of taking Tong Chang-rong, who was confined to his bed, towards Miaogou and nursing him there, and put all our food reserve in her knapsack. That was the last time I saw her.

That evening, in command of a detachment, I crawled through the line of siege and penetrated deep into the enemy-held area. As we had expected, the area behind the enemy lines was almost deserted. When we entered a village near a certain town, the villagers were preparing their feast for New Year's Day. They said they thought everyone in the guerrilla zone had been killed by the Japanese imperialist "punitive" forces, and they were happy to see us; they treated us to rich festive food like dumplings and millet cakes. That night Kim Saeng Gil, a guerrilla of O Paek Ryong's platoon, nearly died from a belly-ache after eating 140 dumplings.

My men felt so tired the next morning that I posted a sentry and let them sleep all day long. As they caught up on their sleep after shivering in cold without proper food or rest for months, their faces were radiant.

We began striking at the enemy the very next day. Our tactic was to attack primarily the small bases of the "punitive" forces and combine to attack considerably large bases.

We struck at the enemy first in Liangshuiquanzi, destroying a puppet Manchukuo army unit and the self-defence corps, and then fell upon the barracks of the Japanese consulate police. And then, after a feinting manoeuvre far away from Liangshuiquanzi, we again raided an enemy convoy of trucks at Xinnangou, capturing a great amount of wheat flour and munitions. From there we slipped away to the mountainous area of Beifengwudong and made preparations for a new battle. On the night of February 16, 1934, we eliminated most of the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers, policemen and self-defence corps members in Beifengwudong, and captured some of them.

After winning a victory there, we crossed the Beigaoli Pass and advanced to Sidong; then we attacked the forest ranger base in Tonggol, killing and capturing all the enemy at their barracks.

The final battle which made a decisive contribution to frustrating the enemy's winter "punitive" operations was fought at Daduchuan, a site of strategic importance on the Tumen-Mudanjiang railway. Disguised as a "punitive" force, we raced over 25 miles of steep mountain pass by means of forced march, divided our force into three groups, stormed the police station and the quarters of the self-defence corps and set fire to the munitions depot.

After this battle the enemy began to lift the siege of the guerrilla zones and retreated to the position from which he had started 90 days before. He could not eliminate the "scourge." The "punitive" operations, which had threatened the very existence of the guerrilla

zones for three months, had failed.

The battle in defence of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone, which for convenience' sake was called Operation Macun, ended in victory for us. This was a miraculous event which passed almost unnoticed on the outskirts of a world preoccupied with the assumption of office by Adolf Hitler, the trials at Leipzig and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. I greatly regret not being able to describe in vivid detail all the heroic efforts made by the defenders of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone in the face of dire hardships.

We paid dearly for the victory. Hundreds of people lost their lives under the gunfire of the enemy. The loss of Choe Kum Suk and Tong Chang-rong caused me bitter pain. Among all the people in the guerrilla zone who came running to greet us with tears on their faces as we returned in triumph from behind the enemy lines, I could not see Choe Kum Suk, who cared for me as lovingly as if I were her own younger brother. The knapsack my orderly carried for me contained a hand mirror I had obtained as a present for her. There were also several sacks of trophies for the members of the women's association.

What harsh trials the members of the association had endured, shedding bitter tears as they defended the guerrilla zone that winter! How many meals they had cooked and how much root of grass they had gathered! Two women, Hye Suk and Yong Suk, lured the enemy who forced them to act as their guides to a place where there were no guerrillas, and caused him many problems

before being killed. By shouting out that the enemy was coming, Choe Chang Bom's aunt lured towards her enemy troops who were crawling up the cliff on which the guerrilla command post was located. These were patriotic woman martyrs in the modern war against the Japanese, just as Kye Wol Hyang[6] and Ron Kae[7] had been in the war against the Japanese invaders in the Middle Ages.

My gift to beloved Choe Kum Suk had come too late. The enemy had deprived of me the only woman I ever called "sister" and felt so attached to in my whole life, the woman who used to say she would not die and was more concerned for my safety than her own when I said that both of us must fight on and live to see the liberation of the motherland.

The death of Tong Chang-rong was also a heartbreaking loss to me. He was one of the most unforgettable of the Chinese comrades-in-arms who had taken loving care of me and respected my ideas. We had frequently argued about important matters concerning political lines. As he was somewhat obstinate, we had now and then failed to reach an agreement, but such differences had not affected our friendship. He had always respected me, saying that I was the only man in whom he could place his trust among the Koreans.

After the battle at Daduchuan we withdrew in the direction of Yaoyinggou, and then returned to Macun, where we reviewed the defence of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone. The people who had returned from evacuation were building their houses on the ashes.

An old man told me he was building his house for the 70th time since he came to the guerrilla zone–such was the vital energy of the people in Jiandao who had decided to live in the guerrilla zone no matter where, and die there should they have to die.

But for the assistance and support of such people, our guerrilla army would not have succeeded in defeating the enemy's large-scale "punitive" operations. The victory of Operation Macun was the result of unity between the army and people and of resistance supported by all the people. The fighting spirit with which we attacked the enemy in spite of all our disadvantages, as well as the protean tactics which, supported by that spirit, we ourselves evolved were the decisive factors in the victory of Operation Macun.

Throughout the whole of Operation Macun the spirit of the guerrilla zone was displayed, a spirit that had thrived and soared aloft like giant trees on the soil of revolutionary power, on the basis of the unbreakable will and mettle of our nation. This spirit enabled us to defend every inch of Xiaowangqing with our blood, with a strength which guns and planes were unable to conquer.

Operation Macun proved to be a brilliant military, political and moral victory for our revolutionary army, enhancing its military authority. In this battle we created a variety of new tactics, which served as the backbone of future guerrilla tactics, and we laid the organizational and tactical foundations for the switch to large-force actions in the subsequent years. The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army acquired rich experience which enabled us to

repulse an enemy attack from any quarter.

Operation Macun ensured the successful defence of Xiaowangqing, helped towards resolving the critical situation in the guerrilla zones in the neighbouring counties, and made a great contribution to promoting the overall Korean revolution centred on the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The spirit of the heroic soldiers who held out against the American invaders on Height 1211[8] in the war in the 1950s was derived from the spirit of the guerrilla zones in the 1930s. We still maintain this spirit as we advance along the straight road of our own style of socialism within imperialist encirclement.

No force in the world can ever break the spirit which was born and tried in the flames of the anti-Japanese war. As long as they possess this spirit, our army and our people will continue to advance along the road of constant victory in the future.

5. Operation Macun

An epidemic of fever broke out in the guerrilla zone in the autumn of that year. This acute disease, with the symptoms of chill, high fever and rash, swept through the valley of Xiaowangqing. I, too, fell ill and was confined to my bed in Shiliping. I learnt later that this illness was an eruptive typhus.

The younger generation nowadays does not know what this disease is like, for they live in a land which has long been free of epidemics.

But when we were waging the armed struggle in the mountains 60 years ago, the people in the guerrilla zone went through untold suffering from epidemics. Since thousands of people lived in the relatively small valley, epidemics of various kinds would break out. The enemy's "punitive" forces would attack frequently, creating havoc as they pursued people from hill to hill, so we could not improve the unsanitary conditions and take appropriate measures to prevent epidemics, even though we wished to. All we could do was to stretch a straw rope across the gate of the house of people who had been affected or paste a warning notice on the

wall: “Off limits. An epidemic site.”

This was the worst possible trial for us–an epidemic raged at the same time as the enemy hurled thousands of troops against us day in and day out, in a do-or-die attempt to eliminate the guerrilla zone. To make matters worse, I was ill and many of the leadership were pale with worry over the fate of the guerrilla zone.

They sent a platoon leader, Kim Thaek Gun, together with his wife and about a platoon of soldiers to guard and attend to me. When the other units went out to fight, these guerrillas remained behind to defend Shiliping. Mr. and Mrs. Kim had been living in Yehe in north Manchuria and had moved to Wangqing by way of Muling, determined to participate in the revolutionary struggle in east Manchuria.

In addition, Choe Kum Suk, the Wangqing county party committee member for women’s work, stayed in Shiliping, on assignment from the party committee to nurse me.

At first I received medical care in the front room of the house of a woman called Chun Ja. Her husband, Kim Kwon Il, had been the secretary of a district party committee and later worked as the secretary of the county party committee.

Whenever the enemy attacked the guerrilla zone, Kim Thaek Gun would carry me on his back from valley to valley to seek shelter.

As the enemy’s “punitive” operations intensified, they carried me deep into a valley in Shiliping along a water course, and built a hut for my shelter under a huge steep rock, difficult for the enemy

to assault. One could only approach it by means of a rope hanging down the rock. Here I recovered completely thanks to the ministrations of the three people tending me.

These unforgettable individuals snatched me from the jaws of death. But for their diligent nursing, I would not have survived in the valley of Shiliping. I was so ill that I lost consciousness several times. I was told later that each time I slipped into a coma, they would shed tears, and cried, "For goodness' sake, pull yourself together. What shall we do if you are so ill?" And when Kim Thaek Gun was out looking for provisions, Choe Kum Suk would support me as we wandered in search of a shelter. It is no exaggeration to say that I only recovered thanks to her help.

I had received much assistance from Choe since the early days after my arrival at Wangqing. When I had arrived at Macun from the campaign in north and south Manchuria, she was the member of the party committee of district No. 2, Dawangqing, for women's work. At that time Ri Sin Gun had been in charge of the women's association of the county. Whenever Choe came to Ri to discuss their work, I would often see her at Ri Chi Baek's house. They were on intimate terms, as close as sisters. Ri Sin Gun praised her greatly for having a fast hand at writing, to which I paid no heed at first. I simply wondered how fast she could write. But I was surprised when I saw the minutes of a meeting she had taken. The contents of the speeches delivered at the meeting had been recorded in full. Modern stenographers are said to write fast, but I have not seen one who could compare to her. She could file away

all the discussions we had in a single night. We let her record the proceedings of important meetings.

She was as magnanimous as a man and warm-hearted; and at the same time, she was a woman of principle, faithful to the revolution. She would have hauled a boat over a sandy beach if I had asked her to do it. I sent her to the enemy-controlled areas on several occasions on various missions, and she worked efficiently there.

As a woman, she sympathized very much with me for having lost my parents. She took the same loving care of me she would have taken of her own younger brother, and I called her "sister." She would visit me before anybody else whenever I returned from the battlefield, slipping into my hands something she felt I needed. Sometimes she would sew up tears in my clothes and knit wool into underwear for me. If she did not come to Lishugou for a long time, I would go to see her. We were so much like brother and sister that we would laugh and joke when we met. When she met old people in the village, she would address them in the dialect of Hamgyong Province. The words she used were funny and her intonation was even more interesting. Even when I mimicked the way she spoke and carried the joke too far, she did not get angry, but simply smiled. But broad-minded as she was, she would not accept jokes about her being pretty.

If I said she was a beauty she would explode, saying that I was making fun of her. I enjoyed it when she pounded me on the back with her fists, so I would joke and call her a beauty in spite of her

awkward feelings. In fact she had a cherubic face, though she was not a woman of great beauty. But to me, women such as Choe Kum Suk in the guerrilla zone were much nobler and prettier than the girls and ladies in the big towns. I thought no women in the world were more beautiful than those in the guerrilla zone. Even though they lived year in and year out among powder fumes, without once making up their faces, they did not complain nor became bitter; they simply devoted themselves to the revolution. I thought they were most beautiful. No doubt it was this attitude of mine that led me to call Choe Kum Suk a pretty girl. In those days I would spare nothing to make the women in the guerrilla zone look much more beautiful.

We often found face powder, cream and other cosmetics among the trophies we had captured. At first, when they saw these articles, our guerrillas would throw them into a stream or trample on them, saying that they were things used to make the faces of Japanese jades beautiful. For some time I did not interfere in the way the aromatic, high-quality trophies were disposed of. For I thought they were useless. Our women in the guerrilla zone did not paint their faces in those days. They all shared the view that to smell of face powder or perfume was a sin. Some women made up their faces once in a long while on holidays, but when they came to gatherings, they would take seats in the back corners, feeling sensitive to the others' views. I regretted this. I thought it painful that they should live a hard life with their faces stained with soot and ashes, smelling of powder fumes all the year round and not

making up their faces even once. So I said to the guerrillas, “None of us must throw away cosmetics from now on. We have women among us, our women in the guerrilla zone. Where on earth are there women more wonderful than our woman guerrillas and women’s association members?”

The soldiers replied in one voice, “You are right. There are no women in the world more wonderful than our women in the guerrilla zone. They did not go to the enemy-controlled area, but have shared their lives with the guerrillas for a year and a half, even though they are bereaved of husbands, children and lovers by the ‘punitive’ atrocities, live on herb roots and tree bark and shiver with cold out in the open in unlined clothes in the dead of winter. We feel ashamed and regret that we Korean men have not made it possible for them to dress in silks and paint their faces with rouge and lipstick so that they could show themselves off to the world. Let us send them all the best things we have captured, even though we don’t eat enough and are poorly-clothed. Let us allow them to powder their faces if there are cosmetics.”

One day we captured cosmetics from the enemy and took them to Choe Kum Suk to give to the women’s association members. She was tremendously excited at the sight of a bundle of cosmetics. From that day the smell of face powder began to hang in the air in the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone. When I went to a club to enjoy a performance of the children’s art troupe on one holiday, I could smell face powder and cream there.

Only Choe Kum Suk did not make herself up even after several

days had passed. I was concerned, and I asked her why she did not. She only smiled instead of answering. There seemed to be some reasons I did not know. So I asked Ri Sin Gun what the reason was, and was told that Choe had given her share of cosmetics to a women's association member in Shiliping.

Later, we attacked the enemy behind his lines and again captured plentiful cosmetics. I gave some of them to Choe Kum Suk, saying that she should not give them to others this time, but make up her own face, for I wished to see her face powdered. She promised me that she would do this in gratitude to me for capturing the cosmetics at the risk of my life.

A few days later on my way to Shiliping to give guidance to the work of Choe Chun Guk's company, I saw Choe Kum Suk, the head of the women's association of Dawangqing, sitting looking very smart at the edge of the River Dawangqing, looking down at the water with her back turned to the road. I got my orderly, Ri Song Rim, to inquire why she was there. From a distance I saw the orderly approach and salute her. Then, all of a sudden he split his sides with laughter for some reason. Curious, I walked over to them quickly. No sooner did I reach the edge of the stream than Ri stopped laughing and pointed at Choe's face with his finger, "Comrade Commander, look at her face."

I could not help smiling myself. Her clean, good-looking face was spottily painted with rouge and cream. But Choe only looked up at us without understanding what was the matter.

"Your face has become a world map, auntie," Ri said.

"Oh, my!" Choe Kum Suk exclaimed, and she plumped down and began to splash water on her face. Clumsy painting is no cause for guilt or shame, but she was totally at a loss, as though she had done something shameful. On a laundry stone close by I saw a puff-box and cream case I had sent to her a few days before.

I realized she had no skill at making-up and was very clumsy at it. But how could I make fun of that? She was making up her face for the first time in her life. Worse still, she had no hand mirror. So she had carefully put rouge and cream on her face as she looked down at her reflection in the water. It was neither surprising nor funny that she painted her face like a map of the world.

As Ri Song Rim approached her to tease her once again, I waved my hand to check him. If he had said a few words more at that time, she would have broken into tears and fled.

I am sure that women who make their faces up with high-quality toilet articles in front of full-length mirrors or at dressing-tables with triple mirrors every morning, will sympathize with Choe Kum Suk when they read this part. I have heard that nowadays it is the fashion for girls who get married to take a dressing-table with triple mirrors with them among their personal belongings. This is material proof that our women wish to make their life more abundant and civilized.

But in those days when we had to eat gruel mixed with vegetables and lie out on the frozen earth, fighting desperate battles to defend the guerrilla zone, only a few of the women in Xiaowangqing had hand mirrors, and they could never dream of

dressing-tables. So they went to the riverside, as Choe Kum Suk did, if they wanted to make themselves up.

That day I did not reproach Ri Song Rim for ridiculing Choe's make-up skill, but I chided myself for not having paid attention to obtaining mirrors for the women in the guerrilla zone. Our sympathy for them was nothing when compared to the affection they had for us. Our love for the people could in no way surpass the infinite affection with which they had supported us and attended on us.

This was the case with Choe Kum Suk. She nursed me all the time with a warm affection and sincerity worth many times more than the confidence I had placed in her. When my illness took a turn for the better, she ran to Tumen 25 miles away before going anywhere else. Tumen was a trading centre for a range of Korean produce. She bought a bundle of Korean pears and apples there and returned to Shiliping.

I was moved to tears to see them. I even suffered from the hallucination that my mother in the world beyond had transformed herself into Choe Kum Suk and was giving me her love. It was indeed a love that only one's own mother or sister could give.

Inhaling deeply the fragrance of the fruits of my motherland which she had put in my hand, I said, full of gratitude, "Sister, how can I repay your kindness?"

"What kindness? If you are so eager to return it, then take me round the sights of Pyongyang after the liberation. I have heard Pyongyang is the most beautiful place in the world." Her reply was

half serious and half joking and yet somehow very earnest.

"Never mind. I am sure I can make your wish come true. Neither of us must be killed, but fight on in order to set our feet on the soil of Pyongyang when the motherland is liberated, sister."

"I shall not die. But I always feel uneasy for you, for you don't take care of yourself."

In order to tempt my appetite she obtained some sesame pounded in a mortar and mixed it into my dishes and gruel. She took pains to serve me with delicious fatty foods, saying that I had fallen seriously ill through lack of nourishment. She made the utmost effort, but everything was scarce or running short at that time.

Kim Thaek Gun caught minnow in a stream and boiled them in soy sauce or broiled them to feed me. He would catch 70 or 80 of minnow a day. He was not only enthusiastic, but very skilful at fishing.

Ashamed of serving only those fish at every meal, Choe went to the village and got noodles. To the guerrillas who inquired after my health, she said, "The Commander must recover as soon as possible, but the trouble is that there is nothing to feed him, it upsets me to prepare his meal everyday from the fish caught by Thaek Gun, but the Commander says he enjoys eating them."

On hearing this, those members of my unit who were master-hands at fishing caught a sackful of fish with dragnet one day and came to visit me. Choe Kum Suk prepared it in various ways and produced a dish for every meal. When I got a little better, she told

me I had continually called out the name of a woman she did not know when I had been in a coma and she mimicked it; it was a joke she had invented with Kim Thaek Gun's wife. It was quite absurd, but I was convulsed with laughter for the first time since I had fallen ill. Looking back upon it now, I see it was laughter through tears. I was well aware of that they were playing the fool in order to cheer me up after being bedridden for so long.

Choe Kum Suk's care of me even included telling me a false date to prevent me going back to Macun before I recovered completely. Whenever I came round from a coma, I asked her how long I had been unconscious, and each time she would reduce the real period. For instance, if I had been in a coma for two days, she said it was two hours and if it had been five days, she would say five hours. After recovering completely, I added up the days from what she had told me and thought that only ten days had passed since I fell ill. I felt quite relieved to hear that.

The lie she had told me was exposed when Choe Chun Guk came to visit me. This honest political instructor could never tell a lie. He told me that I had been bed-bound for a month. She reproved innocent Choe Chun Guk for his tactlessness, but I immediately gathered myself and returned to Macun.

A mountain of information was awaiting me at headquarters. The data illustrated various aspects of the Japanese imperialists' moves to bring Jiandao under their rule.

During the month I had been ill, the enemy had completed the preparations for winter "punitive" operations. High-ranking

officials dispatched from the Japanese Cabinet had come to Jiandao and reached a final decision on the plan for winter "punitive" operations against the guerrilla bases in east Manchuria, after discussing the matter with the brains of the army, gendarmerie, police and diplomats in the field. The issue had even been discussed at a Cabinet meeting in Tokyo.

At meetings the Japanese imperialists held to discuss the problem of Manchuria, they claimed that "Operations for public peace in Manchuria must begin with Jiandao!" They asserted that the conquest of Jiandao was inseparably linked not only with the great cause of building up the puppet Kingdom of Manchukuo but with the security of the frontier of the Empire of Japan; its conquest was therefore a matter of great urgency for the sake of Manchukuo as well as of Japan herself. They also alleged that this campaign should be blessed for the sake of the future of the great Kingdom of Manchukuo and that the commander of the Kwantung Army, whose mission it was to invade the Soviet Union, should supervise the police institutions in Manchuria and that its provost marshal, charged with the control of the army, be in the forefront of the conquest of Jiandao.

After rigging up Manchukuo the Japanese imperialists had adopted several important measures to maintain public peace in the area. They committed a division of the Kwantung Army to "punitive" operations as a replacement for the Jiandao task force, established an armed constabulary in each county, and established a secret service, judiciary police and industrial police; in this way

they made the police structure three-dimensional and expanded it on a large scale.

Associations for the maintenance of public peace were organized throughout Manchuria as joint consultative organs of Japan and Manchukuo for the liquidation of insurgents and the pacification of public opinion. Each province and county was a unit, in addition to the centre; furthermore, various spy organizations emerged and stretched out their tentacles towards the communist camp. Through the introduction of the collective security system which had existed in China in the old days and which had proved effective for Japan in the maintenance of public order in Taiwan and Kwantung area, the Japanese and Manchukuo police bound the people hand and foot. Large-scale colonization by armed Japanese immigrants who were reserve soldiers and the expansion of the self-defence corps forces helped to check the anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese forces which had deep roots in the three provinces of northeast China. The Japanese imperialists empowered local secret-service policemen engaged in the work with rebels to execute them on the spot.

All of these measures showed what painstaking efforts the Japanese imperialists had exerted to dominate and retain the colony of Manchukuo. A particular headache for them was the armed struggle in the Jiandao area, waged by Korean communists who struck at the face and back of the Empire in the northeastern corner of China, and the full-scale national liberation movement of which this struggle was a mainstay. It was no exaggeration when a

Japanese provost marshal said that the conquest of Jiandao would be 90 per cent achieved if the Korean communists' activities were suppressed. The so-called great Empire of Japan was so afraid of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and the guerrilla zones, its strongpoints. The Japanese imperialists therefore made frenzied attempts to eliminate the anti-Japanese guerrilla zones in east Manchuria at any cost.

In the summer of 1933 the military authorities of Japan recalled to Korea part of the Jiandao task force which had suffered heavy casualties from the attacks of the AJPGA and dispatched in its place the Hitomi unit and many other crack troops of the Kwantung Army to various parts of east Manchuria. The main forces of their occupation army in Korea were concentrated in the northern frontier region of our country, so that they could be promptly committed to "mopping-up" operations in the guerrilla zones. Large armed forces–over ten thousand men in all–encircled the guerrilla zones in Jiandao and began winter "punitive" operations.

Directing his main effort to the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone, where the General Staff of the Korean revolution was situated, the enemy hurled against this area forces of 5,000 men from the Kwantung Army, the puppet Manchukuo army, the police and self-defence corps. The density of the enemy's troop dispositions in this battle has never been surpassed in any war except the wars of pre-modern days in which the belligerent armies contended for victory in square formation, and the battle fought in Lushun (Port

Arthur) during the Russo-Japanese War, since the advent of skirmish-line warfare. The enemy even put his air force on alert. Special detective teams supervised by the Jiandao secret service were also dispatched to the areas surrounding the guerrilla zones.

Thus the whole region of east Manchuria became the field of the most fierce and bloody battle between the Japanese imperialists and the Korean communists. It was more a final showdown than a battle for the defence of a few guerrilla zones.

The guerrilla forces in Xiaowangqing were only two companies. Worse still, food reserves were low there. The guerrilla bases in east Manchuria found themselves in a critical situation that threatened their very existence. No one in the guerrilla zone was optimistic enough to believe that the two companies could defeat the powerful enemy armed with guns and aircraft. We were caught between two alternatives–fighting to the last man or abandoning the guerrilla zone and surrendering to the enemy. We chose to fight to the last.

According to the principles of guerrilla tactics, the best thing to do was to avoid a showdown. But if we did not fight, the enemy would swallow up the guerrilla zones on the Tuman River in a single gulp. If we did not defend these zones the revolutionary masses who had been enjoying genuine equality and freedom under the care of the people's revolutionary government would be frozen, starved and shot to death in the dead of winter. Furthermore, the people would no longer look up to us.

The autumn scenery of Wangqing was magnificent, but it was

about to be ruined by the furious storm of the winter “puntive” operations. All of the guerrilla zones turned to us in tense anticipation. The people’s countenances brightened or clouded depending on the soldiers’ expressions.

I began to look for some ingenious scheme, but none occurred to my mind. There was no man at my side with whom I could discuss tactical problems. Pak Hun, a graduate from the Huangpu Military Academy, was absent; Kim Myong Gyun, *xiaogezi* (little man–Tr.), who had served in the Soviet army for some years, and Ri Ung Gol, a graduate from a military academy of the Independence Army, had disappeared after being accused of being members of the “Minsaengdan.”

Ryang Song Ryong, too, had fallen a prey to the “Minsaengdan” nonsense.

I even thought how happy I would be if such a famous general as Hong Pom Do was with us. Hong was a Righteous Volunteers’ Army general who had won a brilliant repute on the soil of Wangqing. The brilliant victories the Independence Army had won at Qingshanli and Fengwugou could be said to be the brainchild of Hong Pom Do. Some people belittled him by saying that he was a general who fought with an intuitive knack, without any strategy, but that was nonsense. What they had described as a knack was in the final analysis the product of strategic genius.

When he was alive, my father often said that Hong Pom Do was a man of remarkable resources. Had he not been a resourceful man, he would not have dealt such a telling blow to the Japanese

army on the Gaoli Pass by employing skilful ambushes so cleverly and prudently. Those who could not discern the intelligence concealed beneath his woodcutter's appearance, should not have claimed that they knew him. Many years had passed since this commander-in-chief of the Korean Independence Army, who once had had the area around Haerbaling under his thumb, concealed his whereabouts. His image seemed to be fading from the people's memory with the passage of time. My distressed mind was tormented by a yearning for help from my forerunners.

As I was struggling day in and day out with the problem of strategy in the log-cabin of the headquarters, the old man Ri Chi Baek called on me with a pot of honey one midnight.

Holding out the pot to me, he said, "I am sorry that I did not give you anything when you were suffering from fever. Please take this honey to help you recover."

"Wild honey is worth its weight in gold. You did wonders to obtain it."

"Old man Ma who lives at the entrance of Hwanggarigol got it. A few days ago he boasted that he had collected some wild honey, so I went to see him. He gave me the whole pot, saying he would sell even his house to obtain anything that was helpful to your health. I am on my way back from his house now."

I felt my heart overflow with gratitude for their consideration.

"Thank you very much, but I am young. You should take this honey."

"Please do not decline the kindness of old man. I have suffered

constant regret for not nursing you. You look haggard beyond description, Commander."

He pulled at my sleeve, suggesting that we take pot luck at his house. I followed him without objecting. A meal with him was welcome, but I was more interested in spending a night in the house still scented by the presence of Pan. Even though I had moved my lodging, I left a large share of my affection with the generous, kind-hearted family who had taken care of me as warmly as if I was their own son.

We ate corn gruel mixed with kidney beans and pumpkin as a midnight snack. The food tasted sweet, perhaps because I had just recovered from my febrile disease. The hostess, Mrs. So Song Nyo, was well aware of my likes and dislikes in food. The most notable food she used to treat me to was potato and maize roast. The potatoes in the Jiandao area were large and the year-old ones contained a lot of sugar. Such roasted potatoes with turnip pickle soup tasted wonderful on a day when it was snowing heavily.

After the snack I lay beside the old man in the room where Pan had stayed.

The old man could not sleep for some reason; he kept sighing continually. I thought he was yearning for his son who had passed away a few months before. His son, Ri Min Gwon, had been severely wounded in an attempt to disarm Guan's unit when it was about to surrender to the enemy in the spring of 1933; he had died while undergoing treatment in a hospital in Qiuyuegou. I myself participated in the ceremony held in the memory of Ri Min Gwon.

In September 1932, a memorial service for the guerrilla, Choe Yun Sik, was held in this house.

"Why do you keep sighing all night long, father?"I asked him, pushing aside the quilt and turning round on the bed to face him.

"I cannot go to sleep. How can I sleep in peace when I have heard that thousands of the enemy are encamped at the entrance to the guerrilla zone? They say that the guerrilla army will be crushed in this 'mopping-up' operation. What do you think, Commander?"

"It is a false rumour spread by the reactionaries. But if we don't make full preparations, the guerrilla zone will collapse in two or three days. Frankly speaking, the destiny of the guerrilla zone is hanging in the balance. So I cannot sleep, either."

"It makes no sense for the guerrilla zone to be destroyed. How can we live without this zone? We would rather kiss the dust or give up the ghost."

"You are quite right. If we are to die, then we must fall in this guerrilla zone. But what should we do? The enemy numbers thousands, and our army defending Xiaowangqing is no more than one hundredth of the size of the enemy."

The old man puffed nervously at a cigarette and spoke in a serious tone of voice, pushing his pillow in front of my face, "If you are short of soldiers, I will become one for you. There are quite a few old men like me in Xiaowangqing who know how to fire a rifle. They will be able to fight much better than the Kanghwajin guard corps if each of them is given a rifle. I think there are rifles and ammunition that the Independence Army

soldiers buried somewhere near Zhongqingli where we lived before. If you can find them, you can surely arm the hunters and the old men who were Independence Army soldiers in the old days as well as the young people like my son-in-law, Jung Gwon, who is busy with some kind of youth work. Everyone should become a fighter and fight to the death fight. If we have no rifles, we must defend the guerrilla zone by clutching the enemy's throat and giving him a belly throw."

At the time when I was in despair over the disparity between our forces and the enemy's, his remark suggested to me that the only way out of the impending difficulties was an all-people resistance. I felt confident that we could seize the initiative in the fight if we fought a death-defying struggle in every quarter, by enlisting not only such paramilitary organizations as the self-defence corps and the Children's Vanguard, which I had intended to use to man the front line with the guerrilla army, but also the unarmed people. The defensive battle at Xiaowangqing would have to be a battle between the enemy's army and every soldier and civilian in the guerrilla zone, rather than a battle between the enemy's army and the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. We could also count on the support of the people from the semi-guerrilla zone.

This talk with Ri Chi Baek encouraged me. I thought, "He is right. When the people say they will fight and they can win, they mean what they say. Victory in war depends on the will of the people and on how efficiently one enlists them."

Thus I received my first inspiration while listening to the calm

voice of an old man who represented the opinion of thousands of people in the Wangqing guerrilla zone. The plan of operations we were mapping out had without fail to contain the people's will as expressed by the old man Ri.

I resolved that the defensive battle we were going to wage at Xiaowangqing should be made an all-out fight fought by all the people, young and old, men and women, in the guerrilla zone. This definition of all-out resistance was an expression of our supreme confidence in the people in the guerrilla zone, who had been sharing life and death, weal and woe, with the army for the past two years. The significant period for which fighting itself had been our routine in the guerrilla zone allowed me to feel such confidence. The guerrilla zones could not have remained strong for two years after their establishment through the efforts of the army alone. One factor was the efforts of the people, who had played a considerable part in building up the army and defending the guerrilla zones. When we fought a hard battle with the enemy, who was ten or a hundred times stronger than us, we felt strong when we had the people in our rear. When we sensed their breath as they ran along the trenches, bringing hot water and rice balls, our combat efficiency increased a thousand times.

This faith in the people's strength underlay my decision to fight an all-out battle and my plan of battle. This determination conformed to the people's will to become an integral whole with the army under all circumstances and their determination to live in the guerrilla base, if they were to live, and die there if they were to

die. An all-out effort by the people, when enlisted, would be a formidable force.

This was the reserve force of the guerrilla army suggested by the old man, Ri Chi Baek. But in fact the people of the guerrilla base were not a mere reserve force; they were a most reliable component of the main force.

We reaffirmed the tactical principles of attacking and destroying dispersed enemy forces by concentrated initiatives and of dispersing and harassing the enemy behind his lines when he came under attack from concentrated forces. We then called on all the people in Xiaowangqing to offer all-out resistance.

In response to the appeal, all the organizations and social strata turned out as one for the preparations for the decisive battle. The self-defence corps and young volunteers' corps advanced to the defensive position together with the guerrilla army and the young and middle-aged men without weapons piled up rock barricades on the steep heights along the line of defence. The famous hunters Jang, Choe, Ri and others from Wangqing came to Macun, formed a hunters' corps with the veterans of the Independence Army, and then took the field. The women's stretcher teams and cooking units also went on the alert. Children set spiked wooden planks in the roads along which the enemy's convoy was expected. The infirm and small children were evacuated to safe places.

We made full preparations for the fight in the determination not to follow in the footsteps of the Independence Army under the northern political and military administration, which had fled,

deserting Wangqing. We would rather fall in battle.

Wangqing had witnessed not only the victory at Fengwugou but also the bitter grief of the ignominious defeat suffered by the Independence Army under the northern political and military administration which retreated, leaving its compatriots to suffer unspeakable "punitive" atrocities.

In south Manchuria there had been an Independence Army organization called the western political and military administration; there had also been the northern political and military administration in the area around Xidapo, Wangqing County, in east Manchuria, which was expanding the area under its military influence with So Il as its president and Kim Jwa Jin as its commander-in-chief. It was said that the patriotic fighters affiliated with the administration numbered 500, and the organization had had one million rounds of ammunition as well as funds amounting to 100,000 *yuan*. The cadet-training school (military academy) run by the organization in Shiliping had been a considerable size; it could accept more than 400 cadets. The processions of animal-drawn convoys carrying supplies of straw sandals and provisions contributed by the peasants in Wangqing and its vicinity to the political-military administration used to stretch back as far as Xidapo. This army, in cooperation with the Korean Independence Army of Hong Pom Do, had once annihilated a large force of the Japanese aggressors' army at Qingshanli.

When Kim Jwa Jin, in grey serge uniform, with a sword at his side, passed by on his white horse with bluish mane, the people in

Wangqing, men and women, young and old, used to bow deeply, as if they were greeting the cortege of the Prime Minister or the King of feudal Korea. They did this to express their gratitude to the Independence Army for the victory at Qingshanli. But at the news of the imminent massive "punitive" attack on Jiandao by the Japanese army, the renowned General Kim Jwa Jin and his men had vanished, without offering the slightest resistance. Unaware of this, the Wangqing people had gone out on the road to have a look at the commander-in-chief, Kim Jwa Jin.

Only one company remained. For some reason this company had attended the graduation ceremony at the Tongil School just prior to the "clean-up" of Jiandao. In accordance with custom the school had prepared a sumptuous feast for the grand graduation ceremony. As soon as the ceremony was over, the soldiers had given three hasty cheers for independence, sat at the table and wolfed down unrefined liquor, rice cakes, cold noodles and other food. When the "punitive" forces arrived, they all fled. The pupils and their parents, too, had scattered in all directions. The scene was said to have been like a disturbed anthill. The "punitive" forces had shot, bayoneted, and slashed with swords the defenceless people who were running helter-skelter for their lives. The Independence Army under the northern political and military administration had been routed. The people in Wangqing lamented over the sudden ruin of the army which had seemed so impressive.

If such a tragic event were to recur in the land of Wangqing, where power was in the hands of the people, we would not have

the face to claim that we were the sons and daughters of Korea.

We decided to strike at the enemy by employing elusive tactics–ambush, allurement, surprise attack and night storming–as guerrilla warfare required. We had evolved these guerrilla tactics ourselves in the course of defending the guerrilla zone from the enemy's repeated "punitive" offensives.

In the early days, when the Korean communists defined guerrilla warfare as the basic form of armed struggle and began to put it into effect, we had known practically nothing about tactics. We could have referred to the experiences of others and their manuals if they had been available, but we could not find them. So we sent a man to the Soviet Union to obtain some reference materials on war, including the combat experience of the Civil War; they had been of some help to us in understanding the concept of guerrilla struggle and the method of organizing ambushes and surprise attacks, but they had not been suitable for our actual situation.

As a first step to writing a manual of guerrilla warfare in our own style, I finished writing a pamphlet after the battle at Jiapigou at the end of March 1933. The pamphlet was titled *Guerrilla Actions,* and it brought together the initial military experience we had gained in our armed activities in the space of more than one year.

The pamphlet dealt with fundamental matters, ranging from the guerrillas' spiritual and moral qualities to the general principles of guerrilla warfare. It also codified all of the principles and methods,

ranging from the organization of guerrilla combat actions such as raid, ambush, defensive battle, march and bivouac, to guerrilla skills such as firing, handling weapons and discipline. Needless to say, this was not a great book of military science such as Sun-tzu's *Art of War* or Clausewitz's *On War.* But in the situation at that time, when we had neither renowned military theoreticians nor veterans of armed struggle, the pamphlet was a valuable handbook, representing the simple theory of our own style of guerrilla warfare. The officers and men of the guerrilla army studied it until it became dog-eared from being carried in their rucksacks, and they tried their best to apply the regulations specified in it to their military practice.

Guerrilla Actions, together with the *Guerrilla Manual* which was published later, provided prototypes for the establishment and development of our revolutionary armed forces and Juche-based tactics.

On November 17, 1933, the enemy attacked the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone from three directions in combined operations of infantry, artillery and air force. The descendants of the Samurai fell upon the guerrilla zone like angry wolves, growling and threatening to bite at everything, even at the trees standing there. These wild invaders seemed intent on swallowing up the land of Wangqing at a single gulp.

The hordes of "punitive" troops crawled in waves over the frozen ground, their aircraft continually bombing Macun and Lishugou where the military and political headquarters were

located. The enemy's tactics had become more brutal. Previously, when frustrated in his attack he used to retreat to his camp and then resume his onslaught. But now he did not retreat even when his advance was checked, but stayed at the point he had reached, consolidating the line he had established before advancing again, step by step. Employing this murderous tactic, he destroyed every life and burnt down everything he came across.

However, our army and people heroically defended the guerrilla base in unbreakable unity.

The fiercest of the battles was fought on Mt. Ppyojok and the outpost in the Ssukpatgol on Mt. Mopan, the gateway to the guerrilla zone. The 3rd company and the Anti-Japanese Self-Defence Corps manning these mountains mowed down the attackers with a surprise barrage of gunfire, grenades and rocks when the enemy had advanced to within 20 metres. The enemy attacked tenaciously in waves, but failed to penetrate the line of the outpost. The defenders on Mt. Mopan destroyed the enemy's highly mobile cavalry that was outflanking the defence at a bend of the River Dawangqing.

As the enemy committed large forces in the successive waves of attacks on Mts. Ppyojok and Mopan, we switched from an all-out defensive to a war of attrition, employing flexible manoeuvres mainly designed as enticements and feints, in combination with positive defensive actions. This was a uniquely flexible tactic for destroying the enemy forces continuously by employing a variety

of combat actions, and not allowing the enemy a moment's breathing space by constantly drawing him into engagement on our own initiative. Had we clung to a stereotyped defence, and not employed mobile tactics in good time, the guerrilla army would have been routed by the enemy's tenacious attacks based on numerical and technical superiority.

In line with our new tactics, the guerrillas, along with the members of the paramilitary organizations, withdrew from the outposts; they lured the enemy deep into the defensive zone and crushed him with constantly-switching tactics–ambush, sharp-shooting, raiding the enemy's campsites and burying bombs in the bonfire.

Bombs could be buried in bonfires even by small boys, and the effectiveness of the measure was assured. Whenever we moved from one position to another we made sure that bombs were buried in the bonfires. As soon as the enemy soldiers reached the deserted position, they would gather around the campfires to warm themselves. Then the bombs would explode, blowing up the enemy. O Ryong Sok, the fourth younger brother of O Paek Ryong, working with the women of the self-defence corps, killed the enemy by this method at the central sentry post on Mt. Ppyojok.

We also organized frequent night raids on the enemy's camps. Raiding parties of two to five guerrillas would infiltrate the enemy's position, scatter leaflets to disillusion the enemy forces and fire a few shots before returning. Three or four shots fired at

the enemy's tents or his campfires would transform his entire camp into bedlam. Such raiding parties were sent three, four, and even five times a night. The enemy soldiers were unable to sleep all night; they trembled in fear and shot at random among themselves. The enemy was so scared by our constant raids that war lunatics began to appear among his ranks. Some enemy soldiers surrendered to us after reading such leaflets as "Appeal to the Japanese Soldiers!" and "Appeal to the Puppet Manchukuo Army Soldiers!" scattered by the guerrillas.

Hunters armed with matchlock rifles, also fought. Though they were old, their marksmanship was marvellous. Their admirable skill in shooting only enemy officers could be compared to that of modern snipers. The members of the women's association rushed to and from the trenches with rice balls and hot water on their heads. Children until 10 years of age came to the battlefields and beat drums and blew trumpets to boost the men's morale.

A conspicuous feature of Operation Macun was the showers of rock blocks from outpost positions, like those on Mt. Ppyojok. These piles of rock would roar down upon the attacking "punitive" forces, killing and wounding them en masse. The thunder of a rock-slide down on the steep slope and the clouds of dust like gunsmoke struck terror into the aggressors' hearts. This method also proved very effective in halting the advance of the enemy's cavalry, vehicles and artillery.

One of the heroes shown up by these battles was a guerrilla with a nickname of "13 bullets." He had been known in the

Wangqing area as an adventurous young man since the time when he had captured rifles from a tax office on the Tuman River on assignment from the YCL organization. When he arrived at the office he had said, “How are you, panjandrums? I am a Korean young man, a member of the Young Communist League.” He introduced himself, then took out a revolver and took down three rifles hanging on the wall without any great hurry. Then he rang up the police station and shouted, “What are you doing over there? There’s a communist here. Come over here quickly, all of you.” The police station had hastily dispatched mounted policemen to the site of the incident. He had returned, only narrowly escaping being killed. He had repeated similar adventures afterwards. I do not need to describe here the kind of criticism he received from the YCL organization.

This young man performed a great feat at the post in the valley of Ssukpatgol, a feat worthy of being recorded in the annals of the anti-Japanese revolution. A ten-man blocking party had been stationed at the post at all times. The head of that party was none other than this young man, “13 bullets.” He was the platoon leader and was also in charge of the YCL group in that party. A large “punitive” force consisting of Japanese and puppet Manchukuo soldiers and self-defence corps men, surrounded the valley under cover of darkness one night and started attacking the post. The blocking party was involved in heavy fighting from dawn. They repelled the enemy’s charge seven times until one corner of the log-cabin that was serving as a post had been burned down.

Calling a YCL group meeting in the thick of the battle, the young man said, "Comrades, behind us is the guerrilla base and our beloved brothers and sisters. If we fall back a single step from here, we will have no right to live in this world as young Koreans. Let us hold out to the last, even though it costs our lives, even though our bodies are torn to pieces!"

The blocking party members, ablaze with hatred, fixed bayonets to their rifles in order to fight hand to hand with the enemy. "13 bullets" was keen to fight in that way as well. But he calmed himself, in order to carry out his assignment. This brave fighter, who had been criticized for his self-opinionated attitude and adventurism, had grown into a seasoned commanding officer who could control and regulate himself in bloody battles.

When we reached the valley with reinforcements, he was lying at the post with 13 shots in his body. Hence his nickname–"13 bullets." Members of the blocking party had been wounded in seven, three and two places. They were given the nicknames of "seven bullets," "three bullets" and "two bullets."

The people in Wangqing called him "13 bullets" instead of his real name. I also called him by his nickname. Eventually his real name faded from the people's memory. It is annoying that I cannot remember his real name. But I draw comfort from the fact that the nickname he earned in the anti-Japanese war will have a more lingering effect on the minds of the readers than that his real name would have.

The battle became heavier as the days went by. People were

evacuated from Xiaowangqing which had been reduced to ashes by the gunfire of the Japanese army to Shiliping. The enemy killed everybody who came into their sight–soldiers and civilians, young and old, men and women. Hundreds of people were killed in Xiaowangqing during the winter "punitive" operations. When we were fighting in front of a lumber camp at Wucidao in Shiliping, a Japanese army unit, which had passed a sentry post disguised as refugees, fired a machinegun at the backs of people who were moving from Macun to Dawangqing. This raid alone cost us scores of casualties. The enemy surrounded the village of Duchuanping in one night and killed all the sleeping people with volleys of machinegun fire. The family of Paek Il Ryong, a secretary of a district committee of the youth association who was a skilled playwright, were all killed. A great number of children in Xiaowangqing were killed during the "punitive" operations of that year.

When the situation in the guerrilla zone was at its worst, the refugees in the valley of Lishugou numbered more than 1,500. The guerrillas went to indescribable lengths to evacuate them to Dawangqing. Sometimes the procession of refugees moving to Dawangqing would be cut to pieces by a surprise attack from the enemy; then, they would wander about the woods the whole day trying to find one another. At that time I covered the evacuation of the revolutionary masses all day long, carrying babies in my arms. Other guerrillas, too, helped the old and the sick, while carrying on fighting. This heartbreaking picture was the initial point of unity

between our army and people of today. It was a picture painted in blood and tears.

When I look back upon the scene of that day as we took the refugees from Lishugou to Shiliping, I feel a lump rise in my throat.

Many of the refugees had not eaten cereals for 20 days because of the enemy's "punitive" operation; they ate bean pods and dried turnip leaves for their meals. In Shiliping for lack of cereals they boiled cowhides and ate them.

If we show our younger generation the "foodstuffs" the people in the guerrilla zone ate during those years when they were too hungry to lift up their heads to see the sun in the sky, they will not be able to hold back their tears at the subhuman starvation their forerunners suffered.

Kim Myong Suk (from Yanji) lost her two children and she herself came within an ace of death, for she had not yet recovered from the period of spring food shortage before the barley harvest. As she had not eaten anything for a whole week, she could not think of burying her children outside, even though she saw them starve to death with her own eyes; she lay in the hut without moving, for she had no energy to sit up. Her neighbours came and managed to pull the bodies of her dead children away from the hut and bury them in fallen leaves; they, too, had eaten nothing for a whole week and were too weak to dig graves. When she ate boiled rice for the first time after her return to her liberated motherland, Kim Myong Suk wept, recollecting

the spring famine in the guerrilla zone which deprived her of her two children.

In the Chechangzi guerrilla base there was a man who, in the battle at Yulangcun, had been wounded by eight machinegun bullets, his skull being split open to reveal his brain, but had miraculously survived. His tenacious grasp on life earned him the nickname of "eight bullets." Later he, too, died of starvation while working in the government office at Dongnancha. On his deathbed, he said, "If I had died when I was wounded eight times, I could have been remembered as a hero. How lamentable it is to die here of hunger!"

The enemy besieged the guerrilla zones and starved the people to death or drove them out to freeze to death.

The Korean people endured unbearable trials in those years. The sacrifices imposed upon them still rankle as unhealed wounds in the heart of our nation.

The rulers of Japan are under a moral obligation to reflect upon the crimes they have committed in Korea and Manchuria. Repentance implies neither shame nor humiliation. It is a process of self-reform by means of reason in the effort to approach perfection. They may close their eyes, but time will never erase the facts of history. Japan must remember that her high rate of growth, the economic bed of roses in which she glorifies, is stained with the blood of the Korean nation. Japan, also, has experienced a national disaster in lives which were lost under foreign fire, and her beloved daughters were raped by occupation troops, hasn't

she?

In spite of the heavy losses he suffered having invaded the guerrilla zone, the enemy tenaciously attempted to prolong the battle in order to make us die of cold and hunger, by denying us reinforcements and fresh supplies of weapons and provisions.

Effecting a decisive turn in the tide of battle was the only way we could save the army and the people in the guerrilla zone. Striking the enemy hard and harassing him behind his lines, together with continued efforts to destroy him within the defensive area was the only way we could save them.

Ever since my arrival in Wangqing, I had been opposed to the tendency that had restricted us to the defence of the guerrilla zone. In other words, my idea was to raid and destroy the enemy by concentrating efforts when the enemy's forces were dispersed, and at the same time to disperse ourselves and harass the enemy in many places behind his lines when he was already under concentrated attack. This was called the tactic of avoiding the enemy where he was strong and attacking him where he was weak. Only then could we defend the guerrilla zone and preserve our forces.

Most of the party cadres in the county and east Manchuria, however, insisted that we should concentrate our efforts in defence when the enemy was attacking us by massing his forces against the guerrilla zone, to save the guerrilla zone and the people.

These differences in opinions regarding a tactical issue resulted in a serious argument as to which of the opinions was in

accordance with Marxist principles. They contended that my opinion was not an expression of Marxism but of escapism and capitulationism, while I asserted the correctness of the tactic of harassing the enemy behind his own lines.

I said that our forces, no matter how concentrated, would never be equal to the enemy's forces, so we should evacuate the population, and leave only a part of the guerrilla force to shoot at chosen points, while the rest of us should disperse and harass the enemy from behind; for instance, ten guerrillas equipped with rifles could take 30 or 40 unarmed young men with them to strike at the enemy from behind at his weak points, then they would be able to capture weapons and provisions.

Many comrades judged the situation correctly and supported me.

But some bigots would not listen to me. Boasting of seniority based on so-called activity, they said, "Young men should listen to experienced people. How is it conceivable for the army to leave the guerrilla zone when the enemy is falling upon us? This idea means deserting the people in order to save the army."

When the guerrilla zone had been reduced to ashes and many people had been killed in a short space of time, I met Tong Chang-rong, Ri Sang Muk, Song Il and other cadres of the ad hoc committee and county party committee, and insisted on conducting harassing operations behind the enemy lines.

"Things have reached a dead end. If we go on in this way, not only we, but also the people, will all be killed. Where can we

retreat? If we retreat deeper into the mountains as we are doing now, there will be no houses and no food in the forest. Retreat will get us nowhere. You seem to think that you and the guerrillas can directly repulse the enemy, but that is hopeless. We should divide the guerrilla army into three or four groups and send them into the enemy-controlled area tonight. If we hit a few of the enemy's bases from behind, the 'punitive' forces will surely retreat from Xiaowangqing."

Hard battles were also being fought in other guerrilla zones in east Manchuria. The people in Hunchun were driven towards Jinchang and Huoshaopu, the people in Wangougou were driven towards Dahuangwai and Sandaowan, and the people in Helong towards Chechangzi. Even when things had come to this pass, some of the leadership hesitated to make a decision.

So I asserted once again the idea of harassing the enemy from behind and declared that I would fight according to my own decision because the army was under my command. Then I assembled the guerrillas and said, "We must not only hold on, but strike the enemy from behind. Who will go to fight behind the enemy lines? Any of you who will follow me, come along! I don't need many, only half of you, and the rest must stay here to protect the people. Those who want to go with me, must break the siege tonight. If we break through, we'll survive. If we attack the enemy bases and strongpoints one after another, the people will spread the news. Then the 'punitive' forces which are attacking this valley will fall back, afraid of being destroyed from behind."

The guerrilla army was thus divided into two groups–one, under the command of Choe Chun Guk, defended Shiliping, and the other, under my command, went to the enemy-controlled area. The YCL members evacuated 1,500 people from the guerrilla zone to Luozigou.

We gave Choe Kum Suk the assignment of taking Tong Changrong, who was confined to his bed, towards Miaogou and nursing him there, and put all our food reserve in her knapsack. That was the last time I saw her.

That evening, in command of a detachment, I crawled through the line of siege and penetrated deep into the enemy-held area. As we had expected, the area behind the enemy lines was almost deserted. When we entered a village near a certain town, the villagers were preparing their feast for New Year's Day. They said they thought everyone in the guerrilla zone had been killed by the Japanese imperialist "punitive" forces, and they were happy to see us; they treated us to rich festive food like dumplings and millet cakes. That night Kim Saeng Gil, a guerrilla of O Paek Ryong's platoon, nearly died from a belly-ache after eating 140 dumplings.

My men felt so tired the next morning that I posted a sentry and let them sleep all day long. As they caught up on their sleep after shivering in cold without proper food or rest for months, their faces were radiant.

We began striking at the enemy the very next day. Our tactic was to attack primarily the small bases of the "punitive" forces and combine to attack considerably large bases.

We struck at the enemy first in Liangshuiquanzi, destroying a puppet Manchukuo army unit and the self-defence corps, and then fell upon the barracks of the Japanese consulate police. And then, after a feinting manoeuvre far away from Liangshuiquanzi, we again raided an enemy convoy of trucks at Xinnangou, capturing a great amount of wheat flour and munitions. From there we slipped away to the mountainous area of Beifengwudong and made preparations for a new battle. On the night of February 16, 1934, we eliminated most of the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers, policemen and self-defence corps members in Beifengwudong, and captured some of them.

After winning a victory there, we crossed the Beigaoli Pass and advanced to Sidong; then we attacked the forest ranger base in Tonggol, killing and capturing all the enemy at their barracks.

The final battle which made a decisive contribution to frustrating the enemy's winter "punitive" operations was fought at Daduchuan, a site of strategic importance on the Tumen-Mudanjiang railway. Disguised as a "punitive" force, we raced over 25 miles of steep mountain pass by means of forced march, divided our force into three groups, stormed the police station and the quarters of the self-defence corps and set fire to the munitions depot.

After this battle the enemy began to lift the siege of the guerrilla zones and retreated to the position from which he had started 90 days before. He could not eliminate the "scourge." The "punitive" operations, which had threatened the very existence of the guerrilla

zones for three months, had failed.

The battle in defence of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone, which for convenience' sake was called Operation Macun, ended in victory for us. This was a miraculous event which passed almost unnoticed on the outskirts of a world preoccupied with the assumption of office by Adolf Hitler, the trials at Leipzig and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. I greatly regret not being able to describe in vivid detail all the heroic efforts made by the defenders of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone in the face of dire hardships.

We paid dearly for the victory. Hundreds of people lost their lives under the gunfire of the enemy. The loss of Choe Kum Suk and Tong Chang-rong caused me bitter pain. Among all the people in the guerrilla zone who came running to greet us with tears on their faces as we returned in triumph from behind the enemy lines, I could not see Choe Kum Suk, who cared for me as lovingly as if I were her own younger brother. The knapsack my orderly carried for me contained a hand mirror I had obtained as a present for her. There were also several sacks of trophies for the members of the women's association.

What harsh trials the members of the association had endured, shedding bitter tears as they defended the guerrilla zone that winter! How many meals they had cooked and how much root of grass they had gathered! Two women, Hye Suk and Yong Suk, lured the enemy who forced them to act as their guides to a place where there were no guerrillas, and caused him many problems

before being killed. By shouting out that the enemy was coming, Choe Chang Bom's aunt lured towards her enemy troops who were crawling up the cliff on which the guerrilla command post was located. These were patriotic woman martyrs in the modern war against the Japanese, just as Kye Wol Hyang[6] and Ron Kae[7] had been in the war against the Japanese invaders in the Middle Ages.

My gift to beloved Choe Kum Suk had come too late. The enemy had deprived of me the only woman I ever called "sister" and felt so attached to in my whole life, the woman who used to say she would not die and was more concerned for my safety than her own when I said that both of us must fight on and live to see the liberation of the motherland.

The death of Tong Chang-rong was also a heartbreaking loss to me. He was one of the most unforgettable of the Chinese comrades-in-arms who had taken loving care of me and respected my ideas. We had frequently argued about important matters concerning political lines. As he was somewhat obstinate, we had now and then failed to reach an agreement, but such differences had not affected our friendship. He had always respected me, saying that I was the only man in whom he could place his trust among the Koreans.

After the battle at Daduchuan we withdrew in the direction of Yaoyinggou, and then returned to Macun, where we reviewed the defence of the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone. The people who had returned from evacuation were building their houses on the ashes.

An old man told me he was building his house for the 70th time since he came to the guerrilla zone–such was the vital energy of the people in Jiandao who had decided to live in the guerrilla zone no matter where, and die there should they have to die.

But for the assistance and support of such people, our guerrilla army would not have succeeded in defeating the enemy's large-scale "punitive" operations. The victory of Operation Macun was the result of unity between the army and people and of resistance supported by all the people. The fighting spirit with which we attacked the enemy in spite of all our disadvantages, as well as the protean tactics which, supported by that spirit, we ourselves evolved were the decisive factors in the victory of Operation Macun.

Throughout the whole of Operation Macun the spirit of the guerrilla zone was displayed, a spirit that had thrived and soared aloft like giant trees on the soil of revolutionary power, on the basis of the unbreakable will and mettle of our nation. This spirit enabled us to defend every inch of Xiaowangqing with our blood, with a strength which guns and planes were unable to conquer.

Operation Macun proved to be a brilliant military, political and moral victory for our revolutionary army, enhancing its military authority. In this battle we created a variety of new tactics, which served as the backbone of future guerrilla tactics, and we laid the organizational and tactical foundations for the switch to large-force actions in the subsequent years. The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army acquired rich experience which enabled us to

repulse an enemy attack from any quarter.

Operation Macun ensured the successful defence of Xiaowangqing, helped towards resolving the critical situation in the guerrilla zones in the neighbouring counties, and made a great contribution to promoting the overall Korean revolution centred on the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The spirit of the heroic soldiers who held out against the American invaders on Height 1211[8] in the war in the 1950s was derived from the spirit of the guerrilla zones in the 1930s. We still maintain this spirit as we advance along the straight road of our own style of socialism within imperialist encirclement.

No force in the world can ever break the spirit which was born and tried in the flames of the anti-Japanese war. As long as they possess this spirit, our army and our people will continue to advance along the road of constant victory in the future.

6. Arsenals in the Thick Forests

When I was in Macun I often visited an arsenal which manufactured arms and munitions. At that time we simply called the arsenal an ironworks. There was an ironworks of this kind in every county in Jiandao.

In the early days one or two people sent by the organization made small weapons such as swords and spears, heating with bellows the charcoal-fired furnace in the ironworks which was sometimes called Macun Arsenal or Xiaowangqing Arsenal.

Just before Operation Macun I visited the ironworks and found no fewer than seven or eight people working there. At that time Kim Sang Uk was managing the ironworks in place of Pak Tu Gyong, who had been transferred to the post of head of the food department of the district government. Those I still remember among the people working there are O Hak Bong, Choe Sang Mun, Yang To Gil, Kang Hae San, Pak Yong Bok and Ri Ung Man. Of these, Kang Hae San was the only man who had joined the ironworks already possessing the technical skill of a blacksmith. The others had almost no experience of handling iron;

they were rank beginners who had never repaired weapons before. But some time later these novices were manufacturing bombs, pistols, rifles and ammunition which we had thought could be made only in a modern munitions factory, and furthermore they made the gunpowder needed for them in a rural smithy which had no lathe, drilling machine, shaper or milling machine. This was a miracle achieved only in the war against the Japanese, a miracle worked by the unshakable will and the revolutionary self-reliant spirit of the Korean communists, who believed that victory in this war depended upon the independent efforts of our own nation.

The naive people of Jiandao once planned to build a hand-grenade factory in the guerrilla zone with the help of the Soviet Union. This was the time when communists all over the world looked to the Soviet Union in humble reverence as a beacon of hope for the emancipation of humanity. The thought of getting assistance from the country which had carried out a revolution before any other gave rise among the people to a spirit of dependence on others. While the idea of depending on others and the aspiration to make a revolution with the support of others engendered the idea of adulation of capitalist powers among the nationalists, it was also the root cause within the communist mentality of reliance on the Soviet Union. At that time we considered it a natural internationalist duty for the communists of the Soviet Union, the first country to have succeeded in a revolution, to support the communists of the less developed countries.

But the Soviet Union sent no reply to our request, neither a promise to comply with it, nor notification that she could not do it or was not in a position to assist us. It was at this time that we resolved firmly to rely only on ourselves. The silence from the Soviet Union confirmed us in our belief that self-reliance was the only way to live, that the decisive factor in promoting the revolution was to enlist our own forces to the maximum and assistance from others was an auxiliary factor.

We therefore paid special attention to the work of the arsenal and concentrated our efforts on it. When Pak Tu Gyong was the manager of the arsenal, we had made sure that the arsenal was equipped with such tools as anvils, hammers, pliers, sledges, bellows, files and a boring machine. With these tools the workers in the arsenal repaired damaged weapons or made new weapons for the guerrilla army and the paramilitary organizations.

The most noteworthy of the weapons manufactured in the arsenal was a single-loaded pistol made by cutting down the barrels of shotguns and Model 38 rifles that had been damaged. These pistols were not supplied to the army, but to the members of the self-defence corps or the Children's Vanguard. Single-loaders made by the Yulangcun guerrilla unit were supplied mainly to the political workers, and they enjoyed a great popularity among their users. Cartridges were also renovated by removing the detonation caps from the empty cartridges used by Model 38 rifles, putting new caps in their places and charging them with powder.

Gunpowder was the most urgently required of all the materials

necessary for the manufacture of munitions, and it was difficult to keep up with demand. At first the arsenals in the guerrilla zones made bombs and renovated bullets with powder sent by miners and underground workers. But this route of acquisition was always dangerous and exposed the revolutionary organizations we had formed with much effort in the mines to considerable risk. Many people lost their lives in their attempt to obtain this gunpowder. A typical example is the incident which had occurred at a pond near Longshuiping, a village close to a mine in Badaogou. Kim Chol Ho, Choe Hyon's wife and comrade-in-arms, had developed into a revolutionary in this village, in front of which there was a deep pond with thick reeds. The people living in Longshuiping cultivated rice by using the water from this pond, but this pond, the lifeline of the peasants in the area, was turned into a sea of blood in a single day. When the fiendish Japanese military police discovered 20 miners from the Badaogou Mine who had sent gunpowder to the guerrilla zone, they killed them mercilessly at the pond.

This incident forced the leaders of the guerrilla bases and the workers in the munitions sector to reconsider the conventional method of acquiring powder solely through organizations in mines and to seek out a new way. Each gram of powder with which the arsenals in the guerrilla zones charged the bombs and cartridges was the crystallized flesh and blood of the fighters.

We decided to produce our own powder. Some people said this was like building a castle on sand, but I thought that if a man was

determined enough he could do anything, and we could surely succeed, just as our ancestors had succeeded before us. With this thought I began studying in earnest the history of gunpowder manufacture and everything relating to it. In the course of this study, I came to the conclusion that nitre, the basic raw material of gunpowder, could be made manually.

Nitre could be made in any place inhabited by people, and we could see it every day. One sunny day I took the workers of the arsenal to the yard of Ri Chi Baek's house, where ashes and compost were piled up. I pointed to a substance like white salt which had formed on the pile of compost, and told them that it was nitre. When they heard this, they burst into laughter, saying that they had been like an old man looking for the pipe he was holding in his hand. We could obtain nitre from the sites of old toilets and from the earth at the bottom of cowshed and stable manure piles.

It is well-known that in the Koryo period Choe Mu Son invented gunpowder and thereby made a great contribution to the defence of the nation. The firearms he manufactured were installed on warships. The naval forces of Koryo inflicted wholesale slaughter on marauding Japanese when they used these firearms in the sea-battle off Jinpho. It is said that he refined ashes and dust he gathered around his house to obtain nitre for making gunpowder. Some people have claimed that the gunpowder of the Koryo period was not the invention of Choe Mu Son, but a product he made by applying a method learned from a foreigner. They alleged that our country offered no theoretical or technical foundations on the basis

of which he could have invented gunpowder. I did not regard it as a fair assessment. Historical records show that, at the time of the Three Kingdoms, Silla already used firearms.

Our self-respect has been injured by the flunkeyistic and nihilistic attitude of those who, on hearing of an invention of another country, would praise the exceptional brain-power of the people of that country, but shrug their shoulders in doubt when they heard that a Korean had invented something.

The workers in the arsenals obtained nitre by a simple method. They used earthenware, tin and ceramic containers with perforated bottoms. They filled these containers with dirt collected from the floors of stables and toilets and from underneath manure piles, and then poured water into them. They caught the water dripping out through the holes at the bottom, and then boiled it down in a cauldron. The white crystal remaining was pure nitre. The upper layer of crystals obtained in this way was called the horizontal formation, and the lower layer, the vertical formation. The vertical formation of crystals, which was deemed to have the characteristic of exploding in one direction, was used for the cartridges of rifles and pistols, while the horizontal formation, which was thought to explode in all directions, was used mostly for bombs.

The raw materials needed for making gunpowder were obtained through the efforts of the masses. Sulphur, an essential material, was obtained from the insulators on the enemy's telephone poles. Gunpowder must contain an inflammable substance like alcohol; Chinese white spirit was substituted for pure alcohol.

Our first experiments were not successful, but we were not dispirited by failure; we repeated the experiments and at last discovered the ideal proportions for compounding the powder.

I cannot forget the people who had participated in the manufacture of gunpowder at that time. One of them was Son Won Gum. I was not acquainted with him, nor had I met him before. And yet I knew his personal history and his record of activity as well as if he were my intimate friend.

Pak Yong Sun was the first man to acquaint me with Son's accomplishments. When he came to Macun to give a short course on bomb-making techniques, he and I spent a few days together, talking about the events taking place around us everyday. Every now and then he would mention the name of Son Won Gum with warm affection and respect. I began to listen with curiosity whenever Son became the subject of our conversation. Pak was his comrade-in-arms and had supplied a reference for his admission to the party.

A man can achieve sudden fame for his exploits, his talent or for an incident in which he is involved. In 1932 Son Won Gum was well known among the revolutionaries of the Jiandao area for his escape from a police station. He was arrested by the police while acting as a messenger travelling from village to village carrying a fiddle and disguised as a drug peddler. He escaped from the station through a manhole of a sewer waist-deep in effluent, painfully dragging a body injured all over by torture, and then spent a full day in a river. It was amazing that he managed to

escape safely through the strict enemy cordon; even more admirable was his endurance in supporting his bleeding body in the water for an entire day.

He later joined the guerrilla army and the Communist Party, and his sincere efforts made him a conspicuous figure. A rise in the Suribawigol valley of Xinchengde hill in Jingucun was the site of the Helong Arsenal, managed by Pak Yong Sun. The workers of this arsenal were the first to produce a bomb known as the noise bomb. The noise bomb was later developed into a chilli bomb and then into a powerful bomb called the Yongil bomb.

The production of Yongil bombs required a lot of materials, and the workers of the arsenal had to go to considerable extremes to obtain these materials. Son Won Gum always led his company in their efforts to find solutions to this knotty problem.

"We once encountered great difficulty in making the noise bombs, because we were running short of the paper and cloth to make the powder holders. Everyone racked their brains to find a solution. Then Son hurried to the village before anyone knew what he was doing, and returned with the paper he had torn away from the doors of his house and cloth from his only quilt. I felt rather ashamed, when I saw him returning, panting, to the arsenal at midnight." Pak Yong Sun told me this in Macun.

"If this is true, then he is a true revolutionary with wonderful qualities," I said, frankly expressing what I felt about him.

Pak went on to say, "Son always led the others in doing everything. Once the manufacture of bombs was interrupted for

lack of wire, so he travelled many miles to Nanyangping and brought back 300 metres of telephone line he had cut there. He also obtained sulphur, scraps of iron and tin plates."

One snowstormy night Son came to the arsenal carrying a heavy load of tin plate and iron pieces, followed by a strange old woman who was carrying an iron cauldron on her head. The old woman's unexpected appearance startled the workers.

As he helped the old woman set down the cauldron, Pak Yong Sun asked him, "What's all this, Won Gum? Why on earth did you bring this grandmother all the way here when the Siberian wind is cutting our flesh to pieces?"

Setting down the load from his back, Son shook his head and said meaningfully, "I did not bring her, she followed me on her own accord."

Pak Yong Sun asked the old woman, "How come you followed him, grandmother?"

"He's an old acquaintance of mine. We got to know each other when I was living in Neifengdong. When we could not afford to buy any medicine for my daughter-in-law who was seriously ill, this young man, who was selling medicine and advertising it by playing a fiddle, gave us some medicine and rice for nothing. So my daughter-in-law was saved. I was sorry that I could not repay him for his kindness. Then, as luck would have it, he came to our village today and asked every household for scrap iron. So we thought this was our chance to repay his kindness. This is the largest cauldron we have. I hope it will be of some help."

She looked down dubiously at the cauldron she had set beside the furnace.

Feeling embarrassed, Pak Yong Sun told her, “Thanks for your offer, grandmother, but we don’t take new cauldrons; we only accept the damaged ones. Please take this back.”

This made the grandmother angry. She said, “Don’t say that. The Japanese swines burnt my two sons to death. I won’t regret giving up this piece of iron.”

The workers of the arsenal made no more attempts to persuade her.

On hearing Pak’s story I felt the urge to go to Helong there and then and see Son Won Gum. The essential element of his image which so captivated me was his iron-willed spirit of self-reliance.

I said excitedly to Pak Yong Sun, “You should have brought him here now. His experience is a good lesson. How happy everyone would have been to hear about his experience! You should tell them about it for him.”

After the short course in Macun, Son Won Gum became known throughout east Manchuria.

When Pak Yong Sun was leaving Macun after the short course I said to him, “When you’re back in Helong, tell Comrade Son Won Gum that his experience had a very good influence on the participants in the short course. And tell him that one day we will meet and talk about our feelings.”

But I never did meet him. In fact, he lost the sight of both eyes in an explosion in the course of his work.

Manufacturing gunpowder was always dangerous. One could even lose one's life. The most dangerous work was charging the bombs and cartridges. Pak Tu Gyong, Pak Yong Sun and Kang Wi Ryong all suffered serious wounds while making gunpowder. And yet, in spite of this, they did not leave their workplace.

Though deprived of his eyesight, Son Won Gum neither lost heart nor became pessimistic. Instead, he inspired his comrades, by saying, "Don't feel sad, comrades. I've lost my sight, but I still have my heart, two arms and two legs." As he cut wire and assembled bombs by touch, he sang the *Internationale.* He had buried his father, elder brother and sister in the wilderness and now he himself was blinded–a young man who had not yet lived half his lifetime. When the guerrilla zones were evacuated, he left his unit lest he should be a burden to his comrades-in-arms, and went to Jingucun. Everyday he heard the enemy propaganda slandering the guerrilla army and the Communist Party, claiming that "The guerrilla army has been annihilated in the mountains," "The people in the guerrilla bases have all been starved to death," "Go to Chechangzi, and you will find nothing but skulls there," and "The Communist Party's politics is destructive. You'll get nothing from that party."

Son's blood boiled in fury. He went from house to house, telling people, "It is not true. The guerrilla army is still alive. It has advanced over a wider area. It is eliminating the enemy in various parts of north and south Manchuria. The guerrilla army, which at first had only a few dozen soldiers, has now grown to a force of

hundreds and thousands of men armed with heavy guns and machineguns. Compatriots and brothers, do not be deceived by the enemy's propaganda. Let us give stronger support to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The war against the Japanese will surely end in victory for us."

His journeying carried him as far as Yanji and Longjing, hundreds of miles away beyond the boundary of Jingucun. The Japanese army and police did not pay any attention to this "blind beggar" who felt his way with a cane as he walked and carried a fiddle on his back–as he had done before. When he heard the news of the battle at Pochonbo on the road, he went around the streets and alleys in Yanji, shouting excitedly; "Korean compatriots, General Kim Il Sung and his army raided Pochonbo on the fourth of June. The Korean People's Revolutionary Army crossed the Amnok River and advanced to the homeland which we long for waking and sleeping. The enemy, scared out of his wits at the revolutionary army's strength, is now screaming in distress and terror. Japanese imperialism is doomed."

His fiery speech set the whole town of Yanji afire. But he was arrested by the Japanese police and burned alive.

"Listen, everybody! I have no eyes, but I can see the bright, liberated motherland. I beg you, stay firm until the day of victory. Long live the Korean revolution!"

These were his words before he was executed. This pioneer of the spirit of self-reliance ended his days at the age of 25. Whenever he recalled Son Won Gum, Pak Yong Sun used to say,

"Won Gum died, without even knowing what it means to be married."

If he was still alive he would have many good things to say about the spirit of self-reliance to the younger generation. His career itself would become a living textbook of self-reliance.

The development of gunpowder production brought about a great change in the production of munitions. As powder became available, the production of bombs increased quickly. A bomb consisted of a fuse and a tin. Tins were sent by the underground organizations in the enemy-controlled areas and semi-guerrilla zones, and into them was inserted something like an oil bottle charged with powder, the gap between the tin and oil vessel being filled with broken pieces of damaged ploughs and other steel splinters for shrapnel, and then the fuse was connected. This made a simple bomb.

Since it was produced manually, the bomb was neither convenient nor attractive to the eye. Clumsy handling could easily cause an accident–one guerrilla army soldier lost an arm through igniting the fuse too slowly during an assault on the enemy in Liangshuiquanzi. But this bomb was much more effective than a hand grenade. The Japanese were terrified of our guerrilla army's bombs.

Once gunpowder became available, we were able to make wooden guns. Wu Yi-cheng's unit fought using guns similar to the anti-tank guns nowadays which we could not afford. We made wooden guns instead. Shortly after the battle of the Dongning

county town the people in Wangqing made the first such wooden gun from an ash tree. We tested the gun during the assault on Daduchuan, and its blast produced thunderous results. It would be only natural to doubt the effectiveness of a hand-made wooden gun. But after our first shot from this gun, the enemy fled in horror. The people in Helong also made wooden guns at the arsenal in Moguyuanzi, Yulangcun. When they fired one of these guns on Qianli Hill the Japanese soldiers and policemen in Erdaogou, eight miles from the hill, would create a hubbub–they were frightened out of their senses! When the revolutionary army fired its wooden guns the enemy was stupefied, for it was beyond the limits of their common sense and imagination to believe that we could make guns in the guerrilla bases, which had no technical equipment.

The revolutionary zeal, indefatigable spirit and creative initiative displayed by the workers of the arsenals in making and repairing

weapons should indeed inspire admiration in the people's hearts. At that time the arsenals of the guerrilla army had hardly any modern machines or tools. The people in Wangqing had only one boring machine, and the workers of the Helong Arsenal managed by Pak Yong Sun had one hand-operated drilling machine they had obtained through a man in Dalazi who worked as a steel forger. My memory is unclear as to whether the Toudaogou and Nengzhiying Arsenals in Yanji County had any such machines or not. Apart from the boring machine and hand-operated drilling

machine, files were the best tools they had. The workers of the arsenals used their files to repair everything. They repaired the cartridge extractor and firing pin of a rifle by filing, grinding, hammering and tempering them in fire, water and clay. Soon they were even able to repair machineguns without any difficulty. There were numerous talented people among the workers in the munitions sector, such as Pak Yong Sun, Son Won Gum, Kang Wi Ryong, Pak Tu Gyong, Song Sung Phil and Kang Hae San. They were skilled enough to set the eye in a needle.

The secret of all these miracles was quite simply the spirit of self-reliance. If the Korean communists, from the early days, had not thought solely of relying on themselves, but remained captive to an illusion of help from communists in other countries, and if they had not cherished the unshakable belief that relying on themselves was the only way to survive and to revive Korea, the arsenals would never have sprung into being in the guerrilla zones, and such powerful weapons as wooden guns and Yongil bombs would never have been produced. We could have appealed to the people for war funds as the Independence Army did, or gone to other countries begging and entreating for help. Once you begin to beg, you begin to fawn on others, sinking to the despicable depths of licking the soles of the others' feet or plucking the mucus from their eyes if they tell you to.

The slogan of self-reliance that we raised in the early days of the anti-Japanese war, and the strenuous efforts we had made to implement it ever since were also in accord with the prevailing

revolutionary situation. The Japanese imperialists' invasion of Manchuria had aggravated the contradictions between Korea and Japan and between China and Japan, and these contradictions inevitably presented the Korean communists with a task of high level combat–an armed struggle. If we had clung to mendicant diplomacy, begging other countries to help us, instead of relying on ourselves, we would not have started the war against Japan immediately after Japan's invasion of Manchuria, nor would we have developed our guerrilla army into a powerful force within a few short years.

Self-reliance was the slogan which most correctly reflected the people's aspiration and the demand to liberate the country by enlisting the nation's own independent efforts and its own strength. It was no accident that people quickly accepted this slogan, transforming smithies into arsenals and building new weapons-repair works in all sorts of places.

Self-reliance and fortitude was the basic spirit underlying not only munitions manufacture and repair but every aspect of the anti-Japanese revolution; it was the criterion by which to measure one's loyalty to the revolution. We did not regard any man who was not self-reliant and did not strive hard as a true revolutionary, no matter how ardent his patriotism, or how committed he might be to communist ideology, because self-reliance was the key to success in the revolution. The leaders of the nationalist movement in the past had been attached to dependence on external forces; they accepted the illusion of Wilson's theory of national self-

determination because they were devoid of the spirit of self-reliance.

In Yilangou, Yanji County, there is a village called Nanyangcun. After the harvest and spring struggle the Japanese army and police descended on this village, mercilessly slaughtered the innocent people and young men, and burnt down their houses. The political workers dispatched to the village gathered the young people and stirred their spirits by saying, "We conduct a non-violent political struggle, but the enemy resorts to arms. We cannot defeat the enemy with bare hands. The time has now come to take up the life-or-death armed struggle against Japanese imperialism. What do you think we should do, comrades?"

One young man, shaking his fist, said, "Let us make spears out of scrap iron. If each of us had a spear, we could stab the enemy and capture his weapons, couldn't we?"

The young man had an old father, Ri Thae Sun, who had been a blacksmith. He went on to say that the tools his father had used were still kept in his shed, and that they could surely be used to make swords and spears.

The young people immediately agreed, saying, "That's right. First let's make swords and spears, and then capture rifles with them."

Using the hammers and pliers with which the old man, Ri Thae Sun, had forged farm implements, they began to forge spears out of the metal hoops of cart-wheels over charcoal made from the roots of birch trees, in a valley beyond the common people's reach.

They put an edge on the forged spears by whetting them on a stone.

The unaccustomed sound of hammering ringing out beyond the village attracted the curiosity of the old smith, and he came to the valley. The young people hid the spears they were making in the grass and pretended to be making steel for tinderboxes.

The old man cast a dubious glance over the young people and asked, “What are you making?”

“Steel for tinderboxes, sir,” they answered in one voice.

“You don’t seem to know what you’re doing. Give that hammer to me.”

In an instant the old man made steel for ten tinderboxes, and then returned home with the tools.

Next day the young people took the tools again when the old man was away in the field, and began forging spears. He appeared unannounced at the young men’s open-air smithy as he had the previous day. He asked them sternly, “What have you done with the steel I made for you yesterday, you children, and why are you making new steel?”

His son replied on behalf of his friends, “Other people have taken them.”

This scene was repeated several times. The old man soon realized that the young men were not making steel for tinderboxes. Why would they take up smithying in the busy farming season just to make steel? One hot summer day the old man approached them unnoticed along the furrows of the maize field and found them

forging spears, learning the skill from his son.

“I was wondering just what you were doing all the spring and summer, and you were making preparations to get killed, you stupid.”

As he fussed and objected collecting the tools together, the embarrassed young people grabbed him by his clothes, saying, “Why should we sit with folded arms when the enemy is killing young people like flies?”

Dumbfounded, the old man nodded his head and thought for a while before saying with dignity, “You hammer and I will hold the pliers. And keep a strict watch.”

That day he made spears for more than ten young people. But then the young men in the neighbouring village came with scrap iron and damaged cart-wheel hoops and exchanged them for all the spears, saying that they should show kindness to people who had no blacksmith.

The old man said that spears could not be made of carbonic steel and ordered them to dump the pieces in the furrows of the field. Instead, he forged scores of daggers and spears from the high-intensity steel of scores of octagonal chisels which he had been concealing.

Armed with the daggers and spears the old man had forged, 20 young men of Nanyangcun raided a small unit of the puppet Manchukuo army moving from Yanji to Jiulongping, capturing lots of weapons and ammunition. The old man praised their victory delightedly. Under his management the secret smithy in

Nanyangcun went on to produce many swords and spears. Eventually, even bombs were produced in the smithy. The old man devoted his life to producing and repairing munitions until he was captured and killed by the enemy.

This is only a single instance demonstrating the vital force of self-reliance. In this fashion, self-reliance opened a new era in the history of the national liberation struggle in our country, the era in which everything was created from nothing. These vital phases may be regarded as living proof of the correctness and power of the communist method of solving all problems by allowing full scope to the people's strength and wisdom.

Self-reliance was the most important method by which the Korean communists established the principle of Juche in their struggle, and they could neither think of nor speak about Juche apart from self-reliance, nor could they imagine the development of the Korean revolution without this quality. Only self-reliance was capable of eradicating once and for all the worship of great powers which was still a great fetter on the spiritual life of our people in modern times and allowing us to pave a new way to victorious national resurrection by following the ideal of independence, self-development and self-sufficiency. Self-reliance was the touchstone with which to distinguish a man equipped with the spirit of Juche from a man who was not.

We therefore consistently inculcated the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance in the masses from the very first day of the war against Japan. The idea that, while help from others would be

welcome, we must and could liberate the country through our own efforts even without others' help; the idea that, while help from higher echelons in solving our problems would be welcome, we must find the solutions to all our problems through our own efforts and wisdom, even without such help–this idea easily won the sympathy of the masses. But quite a few people still retained remnants of the outworn ideas, and either did not believe in their strength or underestimated it.

Some of those who had welcomed our appeal to carry through the revolution by placing our faith and reliance in the strength of our people became dubious and perplexed in the face of a minor problem such as arming ourselves.

One day, when we were absorbed in the military training in Antu which was part of the preparations for the founding of the guerrilla army, Ri Yong Bae and Pang In Hyon broke a rifle's firing pin while cleaning it. In view of the conditions at the time, when each rifle had to be captured at the cost of blood, this was a serious case which could not be allowed to pass with impunity.

After examining the broken pin carefully, I said to them, "I will give you one day; repair it by this time tomorrow!"

They both stared at me wide-eyed. They clearly had not expected me to make such a preposterous demand.

"How can we repair a rifle manufactured in a modern munitions factory? We can fight a battle or risk our lives, but this is something we cannot even imagine doing with our poor skills, isn't it?"

"How can we call our undertaking by the sacred name of revolution if it is something that can be achieved simply by picking out the easy jobs to do? I think that the true meaning of revolution and the pride of a revolutionary lie in doing those things nobody dares to do."

"But the broken pin is made of steel. Can it be repaired with theory alone?"

Pang In Hyon looked gloomily at the bolt with pin in his hand. Until that moment he regarded my demand to repair it as absurd and unreasonable. What would be the consequences of a commander revoking his orders at such a moment? Though I knew my orders were unusual, I told them again coldly, "If you cannot repair it, you are not entitled to be guerrillas. How can you carry through the complicated enterprise of social transformation when you cannot repair a little pin? If you do not intend to repair it, you may not participate in drill from tomorrow."

When I threatened them in this way, they were all startled; they promised me to repair it and asked me to teach them the method.

"I don't know the method, either. You must discover it yourselves."

They left the training ground with the bolt with the broken pin, their faces stained with tears.

Next day they appeared at the training ground, their faces beaming, for they had repaired the pin. It was not repaired perfectly, but it worked as it was meant to. The other comrades were all surprised. Even I, who had given the orders, could not

believe my eyes. How could they, who had said they could not even imagine repairing it because they had no skill, repair it with so little difficulty?

Pang In Hyon hastily explained the repair process:

"At first we thought of making a new pin with wire, but we could not get proper steel wire. So then we heated the broken pin and extended it by beating it out. We whetted it on a stone and managed to shape it, but the problem was to make it hard again. We went to Xiaxiaoshahe to see an experienced smith who lives there. He told us to temper it in oil. We did as we were told and this steel is the result."

Their experience greatly excited the others. Everyone greeted with excitement the lesson that any one could work wonders if he had faith in his strength and made effective use of it.

I still remember the bright smiles covering the faces of Ri Yong Bae and Pang In Hyon as they ran to the training ground with the repaired pin in the hand. The smiles were doubtless an expression of immeasurable pride in their own strength. What ecstasy on earth can be more powerful than the pleasure and joy a man feels when he finds a strength he thought he did not possess?

A rifle's firing pin is not such a big thing. One could easily capture 10 rifles in the time it takes to repair it. But the lesson learned from repairing it generates a power greater than that of a hydrogen bomb.

Marx and Engels defined the history of the development of mankind as the history of class struggle and, needless to say, this is

a correct proposition. The history of mankind can also be said to be the history of man discovering, creating and perfecting himself. In other words, it is the history of the creation of the human being who continuously discovers and develops in himself the powers and skills peculiar to himself and, at the same time, the history of the struggle to defend the independence of the popular masses. It can also be called the history of innovation by a human being who has steadily refined himself in the political and ideological, cultural and moral, scientific and technological dimensions. Through the effort of creation and innovation, mankind has ushered in the age of the rocket, computers, genetic engineering and the green revolution.

From this point of view we can say that self-reliance is a powerful force which has driven the development of history. If people had lived simply believing in the grace of God, the "Lord of Creation," without developing their own strength, they would still be lost in the Paleolithic Age.

When we were operating the arsenals at full pressure in various parts of east Manchuria, Shi Zhong-heng hinted to me that there was a munitions works which had once been managed by Wang De-lin's national salvation army in the Dongning county town. This information increased my interest in the town. According to Shi Zhong-heng, the works was organized in the spring of 1932 as an ordnance repair shop equipped with a few lathes, casting facilities and sewing machines. From the latter half of 1932 this shop developed into a comprehensive munitions factory with more

than 200 persons involved in manufacturing hand grenades, mortar shells, 25-cartridge automatic rifles, and the guns known as hog-guns. Since that time the factory had been equipped with new machine-tools and other means of production. The weapons manufactured in this factory had been supplied mainly to the NSA units in Dadianzi, Wangqing County, and the Ningan region. Following the Japanese occupation the factory was dissolved, but its equipment and machines were left intact. If we had succeeded in taking the town completely into our control in the autumn of 1933, the factory would inevitably have become ours and we could have armed ourselves more adequately with up-to-date light and heavy weapons.

The experience gained in the munitions industry in the guerrilla bases in the first half of the 1930s was applied and developed in the arsenals built in the bases on Mt. Paektu during the latter half of the 1930s.

We organized a sewing unit in each of the guerrilla bases and thus solved the problem of military uniform by our own efforts. The cloth was obtained, dyed and sewn by ourselves. We boiled down the bark of oak, black walnut and Amur cork trees in a large cauldron and soaked the cloth in the water to dye it khaki. Sometimes the colour of the cloth varied a little with the proportion of the barks from various species of trees.

The first members of the Wangqing sewing unit were Kim Ryon Hwa and Jon Mun Jin, who had once been a nurse at a hospital in the village of six households. There was also a male

designer, but I cannot remember his name. The unit was later reinforced with Ri Il Pha, Kim Myong Suk and Kim Sun Hui. It also employed temporary workers when it was short of hands.

Jon Mun Jin made my uniform in the days in Xiaowangqing. When I went from Antu to Wangqing, the women in the unit said they would make a fine uniform for the young general and they sewed a full uniform set, including an overcoat, for me. The material was ordinary cotton cloth dyed by hand, but each stitch eloquently declared warm and delicate care of the makers' hands.

The Xiaowangqing sewing unit, with only two or three sewing machines, made all the uniforms needed for a battalion or a regiment and even full-dress uniforms to the order of battalion or regimental headquarters for the officers and men of the Chinese nationalist units. A full-dress uniform included coat, trousers, cap, puttees and cartridge belts. The amount of work assigned to the unit by far exceeded its capacity. When they were overburdened with work, the diligent and faithful sewing-unit operatives would press on with their work without sleeping at night. When they were sleepy, they dipped their faces in water and sang to keep awake. They sang so much that they all learned scores of revolutionary songs by heart.

The first leader of the Xiaowangqing sewing unit was Kim Ryon Hwa. The people in Wangqing called her a hoyden. Some even called her a tomboy, since she occasionally smoked a cigarette. But this frivolous woman was very skilful at knitting and sewing. She began to learn sewing after she got married. Her

husband was a misfortunate one-legged man. The first most significant means for earning a livelihood she had found in her hopeless struggle with poverty was doing needlework for others. Her skill in sewing had developed since then. She not only made smart uniforms, but also fine Chinese clothes. Those who had accused her of being a tomboy would now bow their heads in the direction of the valley where the sewing unit was situated, saying, "Please accept my humble greeting, sister," when once they had tried the clothes she made for them.

Many of the members of the sewing unit were forerunners of the culture of self-reliance with no less enthusiasm than the arsenal workers. Kim Myong Suk, Jon Mun Jin, Han Song Hui, An Sun Hwa, Choe Hui Suk, Kim Yong Gum, Kim Su Bok, Choe In Suk, Pak Jong Suk, Jo Yong Suk, Pak Su Hwan, Ma In Ok and Kim Son were all master-hands who accompanied us and worked hard to produce tens of thousands of uniforms. I cannot find the words to describe adequately the well-known last moment of An Sun Hwa, and the heroic death of six members of the sewing unit at the secret camp in Ganbahezi.

We built hospitals in each of the guerrilla zones to treat the wounded and ill. All the medical appliances used in the treatment, such as scalpels and tweezers, were made by the technicians in the arsenals and most of the herb medicines were obtained and produced by the medical workers, with the help of the masses. There were only a few modern medicines.

There was nowhere we could turn for doctors and nurses, so we

had to train them for ourselves. A few pioneers who had been doctors of Koryo medicine trained a great number of assistants. Rim Chun Chu and Ri Pong Su were not only famous doctors with distinguished records but also qualified teachers who rendered meritorious services in the training of our medical reserves. How many people's lives were saved by their treatment, so that they could return with joy to their units!

We also solved the problem of food grains by relying on our own resources. It was not in our style to solve this problem by setting the people an amount of food to be delivered and then collecting it from them. We proposed the aim of attaining self-sufficiency in food for the army and the paramilitary organizations such as the Red Guards, Anti-Japanese Self-defence Corps, Children's Vanguard and the young volunteers' corps, and issued a strong demand to them to cultivate crops through their own efforts on the arable land in the guerrilla zones. In the latter half of the 1930s, when the Korean People's Revolutionary Army expanded over a wide area and was conducting large-scale guerrilla warfare, we sent troops to the rear to farm at the foot of Mt. Paektu, away from the battle fronts.

Self-reliance was thus essential to the survival of the revolutionary army in the long-drawn-out war against the Japanese. The realization that one could survive only by relying on oneself became a part of the thinking of all the guerrillas; self-reliance became their motto. Those who made this motto their very lifeblood upheld their honour even on an isolated island, and those

who did not surrendered to the enemy or left their ranks, abandoning their principles halfway.

The seed of self-reliance nurtured by the anti-Japanese forerunners in the snowstorms of Paektu was implanted in the minds of the people of the whole country after liberation, serving as the motive power that kindled the flames of the effort to build a new Korea and gave birth in this eastern corner of the world to the legendary Chollima. When we began a project to manufacture an electric locomotive at a small factory which had been a repair shop, a foreign ambassador to our country said that he would pass through the eye of a needle if the Koreans made electric locomotives by themselves. The pleasant whistle of the electric locomotive *Pulgungi-1*, which our workers and technicians made by relying on their own ability, shattered the ambassador's complacent prediction.

The spirit of self-reliance that rang out in the hammering of the arsenals in the guerrilla zones drove the pulse of the era of the Workers' Party and provided the powerful force that propelled this era forward.

The spirit of self-reliance, born of the tempest of the war against the Japanese, still pulses in the slogans, "Let us live our own way!" "Let us meet the requirements of Juche in ideology, technology and culture!"–slogans devised by the Secretary for Organizational Affairs, Kim Jong Il–and in the slogan, "When the Party decides, we do everything!" In the final decade of the turbulent 20th century our people are advancing towards new heights singing the *March of Self-*

reliance, as they go.

7. An Immortal Flower

In the year 1933, the revolutionary organization in Wangougou sent Kim Kum Sun (Kim Kum Nyo) and Kim Ok Sun, pupils of the Beidong Children's Corps school, to Xiaowangqing, according to the decision of higher echelon.

These two girls were talented members of an art troupe who were held in special affection by the people of the Yanji area. They came to Macun on an assignment from the revolutionary organization to spread songs and dances in the Wangqing guerrilla base, where there were many revolutionary people. In those days the revolutionary organizations in east Manchuria used to send many talented people to Xiaowangqing, the strategic centre of the Korean revolution. The people in east Manchuria rendered every assistance to Xiaowangqing, just as our people nowadays spare nothing to support Pyongyang.

On their arrival at Macun the two girls, guided by the caretaker of the Beidong Children's Corps school who had accompanied them, came directly to the army headquarters to see me. I found them very young, not much over 10. At first I guessed they were

sisters. But they were not. Only their names were similar.

The caretaker of the Beidong Children's Corps school introduced the girls to me in turn, explaining with humour the children's records and their family backgrounds. That story was very impressive. While the caretaker was telling me about her, Kim Ok Sun wept. I, too, was close to tears, for the 13 years of her life were full of tragic events.

When she was nine years old, she was engaged to a landlord's son who was more than 20 years old. The engagement was arranged by fraudulent means without her knowledge or her parents'. In those days a young man over 20 was regarded as an old bachelor, and his parents were anxiously searching for a good match through the offices of go-betweens. The young man was apparently a dim-wit or cripple, with no hopes of getting married by fair and just means. In fact, his parents, unable to find a mate for their son who was now on the wrong side of 20, had hastily forged the engagement by treating the girl's father to a heavy drinking bout and forcing the drunken man to sealing the agreement with his thumb. According to the contract Kim Ok Sun was obliged by law to marry the bachelor when she was 15 years old. Her father remained unconscious of the outlandish contract for two days. When he came to himself back at home he cried bitterly in discovering in his pocket a document promising his daughter in marriage, sealed with his fingerprint, and 80 *yuan* of money of doubtful origin. The money was a present from the family of the would-be bridegroom in return for the agreement. When she

learned of this, Kim Ok Sun's life had been filled with tears. But her father, Kim Jae Man, who had sealed his daughter's future by means of this piece of paper, soon bought a straw-thatched house, a kitchen garden, an ox and a pig, and lived in quiet prosperity. He seemed to think there was no use crying over spilt milk, no use protesting against the power of the rich, and that the best thing to do was to turn the money to good account, to turn the misfortune into a blessing. Whenever his daughter wept over her future, he would soothe her, saying:

"Don't cry, my dear. That 80 *yuan* has breathed life into our ruined family. Anyway, this is better than dying of hunger. You will feel easier if you think that your engagement has saved your family from destruction."

The ignorant and simple man did not understand the revolution. He was so naive that he thought he could free himself from poverty, and even become a millionaire, if only he worked his fingers to the bone. This led him to harbour illusions about the landlord who was exploiting him. Now and then the landlord brought something to eat to the house, so Kim Jae Man thought there was no kinder landlord in this world than his. His daughter once went to the yard of her school to listen to a speech by an underground operative. When he learned about this, he beat her cruelly, for he was afraid that his daughter might become involved in the revolution.

Only when his village had been reduced to ashes for the fifth time by the enemy's "punitive" invasion was his class

consciousness aroused. His family lost their house and draught animal at the hands of the invaders. Some of his neighbours were killed in fire.

On the night when he sent his daughter to the Wangougou guerrilla zone, he said, "We must stake our lives now on a life-and-death struggle with the enemy, my dear. I was too ignorant of the ways of the world. Now you must join in the revolution and do away with those devils."

Later Kim Ok Sun made her home at Kim Kum Sun's house in Songlindong; together with Kum Sun, she attended the Children's Corps school in Beidong and as a member of the district, and then of the county art troupe, she participated in the work of enlightening the masses.

Korean children like Kim Ok Sun at the tender age when they should have been complaining of their lot to indulgent parents, had to launch headfirst into the struggle with poverty, tugged to and fro by the rough waves of a world which made no allowances for them. Our children rose in resistance against this cruel world, which was equally oppressive to young and old. The Korean children in Jiandao formed revolutionary organizations such as the Children's Corps, the Children's Vanguard and the Children's Expeditionary Corps in various areas, and participated in the struggle as an organized force. All our boys and girls, educated and trained in the revolutionary organizations, played their parts as more than mere small cogs in the wheel of the revolution against the Japanese.

Kim Ok Sun was one of these children, and so was Kim Kum Sun. When I heard her story I could not but feel pity for Kim Ok Sun. The misfortune of this little girl was the epitome of the misfortune suffered by millions of Korean children.

How laudable and honourable their determination and mettle were, when they left their dear homes at such a tender age and came to the guerrilla base to work for the revolution! They had walked hundreds of miles from Wangougou to Macun by way of Dahuangwai and Yaoyinggou in order to support Xiaowangqing; and how thankful we were! How admirable and praiseworthy for these two girls to have come all the way to Xiaowangqing, making their way along the thorny path with the help of their canes, carrying heavy knapsacks on their backs and wearing work shoes made for adults!

Thinking that I should exchange those work shoes for canvass or rubber shoes, I asked them, "Who sent you to Xiaowangqing?"

"Mr. Yun Pyong Do did," the girls answered cheerfully, standing to attention, their hands on the sides of their skirts. Not only were their eyes as bright as stars, but their voices rang with refreshing vitality.

I was very glad. Being with children was one of the great pleasures of my life. Their laughter relieved me my sense of hardships and mental torment. Mix with children, share their feelings, and you will feel a strong urge to live, and you will understand that they bring beauty and variety to people's lives. You will also feel inspired with a sense of the noble duty of

bringing them to full bloom and safeguarding the ideals glowing in their eyes.

Feeling pity for Kum Sun, with her calves and face covered in scratches, I asked her:

"It must have cost you a great deal of trouble to come all this way. Didn't you find it hard to cross so many high passes?"

"We had a hard time of it with the blisters on our soles. But we did not give any sign that we felt tired, in case the man who was bringing us might send us back to Wangougou."

"Wouldn't it have been nice to stay at home with your parents?"

"Yes, it would, but when will we become grown-ups like that? Our instructor in the Children's Corps said we had to experience hardships to become grown-ups. I want to grow up as soon as possible, through many hardships."

"Why do you wish to grow up quickly?"

"We will liberate Korea. Please don't send us back home, for mercy's sake, Commander Kim."

I was surprised at her manly way of thinking. Young as she was, she was unusually advanced in her determination to devote her life to the liberation of Korea.

"Don't worry about that. You two girls are among the few talented children in Jiandao–why should I send you back? Stay with us in Wangqing from now on. Taking part in the Children's Corps life here will not be too bad at all."

Kum Sun did not hide her joy; she clapped her hands.

I asked the leaders of the YCL in the county and district to

admit them to the Children's Corps school in Macun, so that they could continue their organizational life in the corps, and requested they be provided with lodgings in kind-hearted households, so that they would feel at home in this strange place so far away from their parents.

That year the guerrillas and the people of Wangqing held a grand May Day celebration in the playground of the Children's Corps school in Macun. The celebration was attended by all the soldiers in the Wangqing area. The two girls from Wangougou won first place in the running and high jump respectively that day, receiving warm applause from the people of Wangqing.

Kum Sun was small in build for her age. When she walked, with a knapsack on her back, moving her legs quickly in her light gait at the head of the art troupe, everybody smiled at her pure cute image.

I, too, derived much strength from this image. By nature, I preferred optimists. In the days when we were fighting arduous battle in the mountains and surviving on grass root, one optimist gave more strength than dozens of guns. Kum Sun was an outstanding fighter and optimist, representing the youngest generation of the alliance of the three organizations–the Communist Party, YCL and Children's Corps.

Some days after I met Kum Sun, I called the pupils of the school to the headquarters to learn how they were getting along.

From the outset the Children's Corps members were always supposed to carry a week's emergency rations with them in

knapsacks. But many of the children I examined had eaten the parched-rice flour supplied by the school. Only Kum Sun had kept her rations quite untouched. After examining their knapsacks I praised her by giving the thumbs up sign, saying, “The other children have eaten theirs all, but Kum Sun, the youngest, has resisted temptation splendidly. She is the best!”

She only smiled, looking shy, and then said, “I, too, have taken out the powder pouch several times. I was scarcely able to suppress the temptation to eat it.”

“But how did you do it?”

“While the others were eating the flour, I kept my eyes shut. If I still felt like eating, I went outside. And when I could not bear it any more outside, I went to the well and drank a dipperful of water. Then I felt as full as if I had eaten the flour.”

I was moved to admiration by her fluent answer. This child’s sorrowful mind mirrored the destitution of the people in the guerrilla zone, and the noble aspiration of these young indomitable eagles to develop the revolution staunchly in spite of crushing poverty.

That day we gave each of the children ten cups of parched-rice flour and some corncakes, and put matchboxes in their knapsacks. A few days later we sent their school two cartloads of supplies, including new padded clothes and quilts, shoes, notebooks and pencils. We fought frequent battles, and had kept some of the captured goods in reserve. Food and clothes were scarce, but we sent a large share of the reserves to the Children’s Corps school.

"All the best things for the children!"–this has become an immutable principle of our life nowadays; even in those difficult days when we were fighting in a foreign land we would give the children everything we could, according to this principle. In order to obtain food, clothes and other things we needed for them, we would not hesitate to take the army into battle.

We promoted the slogan, "Let us always be ready for the independence of Korea and the liberation of the world's proletariat!" among the Children's Corps and educated them in the spirit of patriotism and proletarian internationalism.

They performed truly great exploits, no less significant than those performed by the adults, enlightening the masses, giving artistic performances, standing guard duty, delivering messages, reconnoitring enemy movements, capturing weapons from the enemy, and defending the guerrilla zone. When we were rebuilding the log-cabins burned down during the enemy's "punitive" atrocities we could always see them at work, these young eagles, running with rice balls along the trenches where revolutionary soldiers were embattled, singing revolutionary songs amid the flames of the battle fought to defend the guerrilla base. In the farming season they weeded and harvested in the fields. Sometimes they would pick wild fruits and send them to the guerrilla barracks.

One day I saw the pupils of the Children's Corps school standing sentry at the central sentry-post on Mt. Ppyojok. With a heavy grenade on each of their waists, they stood on guard, each

holding a 1.5-metre pole tipped with an iron spearhead. They said they were relieved every hour. They changed the guards when half of a joss stick the length of two matchsticks was burned away. They told me the stick burned for two hours, and I thought this method of measuring time quite ingenious.

These children once came to see me with a suit of clothes consisting of lined Korean jacket and trousers, trouser-leg ties, grey silk waistcoat, riding breeches, leather shoes, boots and black rubber shoes. It was a token of their thanks to me for sending trophies to their school on many occasions. In those days we sent the Children's Corps members all the Korean apples we captured from the Japanese convoys. Many of the children were born in this foreign country and had never been to Korea or seen a Korean apple. Kim Ok Sun, who witnessed the event, often recalls with warm affection the tears full of earnest gratitude, which the children shed when they received the crates of apples.

Pak Kil Song, the head of the children's department, visited their school one day and told them, "Boys and girls, Commander Kim takes loving care of us just as a father cares for his own children. We are the beneficiaries of his love, unable to repay his kindness. We have to show our thanks to him. What do you think we should do?"

As soon as Pak finished speaking, Kum Sun stood up and said, "Let us have some fine clothes made for him. They say he wears unlined clothes even in the winter cold."

Pak Kil Song smiled at her words.

"Kum Sun has suggested making some fine clothes for him. What do you think of the idea?"

The children answered in chorus, "It's a good idea."

"Alright, then. I, too, had thought of making warm clothes for him as Kum Sun has suggested. Let us obtain some cloth and have some good clothes tailored by the women's association members or by the sewing-unit members. But you must remember that cloth does not simply fall from the sky."

Kum Sun stood up again and spoke freely:

"Let us pick mushrooms, dry them and sell them. They say mushrooms are expensive. Once we have money, we can buy cloth."

The other children echoed her words enthusiastically, "That's it, that's it. Let us pick mushrooms and sell them to landlords."

Starting the next day they went to the mountains with Pak Kil Song, carrying baskets. I saw them several times marching in line past the valley in Lishugou, singing as they carried the picked mushrooms, but I did not know the secret contained in those baskets. I only thought they were going to all this trouble to gather tasty food for the wounded in the hospital. Those mushrooms had now been transformed into money and then into the clothes which appeared before me.

After making the Children's Corps salute Kum Sun said, "We had a suit of clothes made for you, since you wear unlined clothes even in the winter cold. Please accept it."

It was true that I used to wear unlined clothes in winter. Taking

the clothes I felt like weeping, without knowing why. I said to them, “Though I wear unlined clothes, I am in the prime of my life. I will not forget your kindness all my life long. I am going to give these clothes to a grandfather who is the oldest person in Xiaowangqing; please don’t feel disappointed.”

They looked at me regretfully, tears on their unhappy faces. They were very sorry that I had not accepted the clothes for myself. I had to speak to them two or three more times before they would smile.

After the mass meeting was over, Kum Sun came to me and whispered, as she felt the sleeves of my uniform, “The cloth is so thin that the wind will blow right through it to the bone.”

Even now, when the winter cold arrives, those words spoken by Kum Sun in Xiaowangqing ring in my ears.

At first the Wangqing people used to call her “black eye.” They gave her that nickname because her eyes were black. Some time later she was given another nickname–“Macun hawfinch.” The women from the Kilju and Myongchon areas gave her this nickname because she was small and yet lovable like a hawfinch. When people called her “Black eye!” she simply answered “Yes!” and the same when they called her “Macun hawfinch!” She was not offended even if they used her nicknames dozens of times a day.

It was a red-letter day for the Wangqing people when Kum Sun gave a performance of tap-dancing. She always danced with Ok Sun and this dance received the greatest applause of all the items

in the performance programme of the art troupe of the Children's Corps. When she repeated the turn in which she wove a kerchief between her legs while beating out a quick rhythm on the stage with her feet, the audience would cheer and stamp.

During my days in Wangqing in the mornings I used to ride up and down the valley of Macun on my white horse to learn about the situation in the guerrilla zone, and think up new plans. The morning ride was an essential part of my daily routine. The bugler of the guerrilla army, Song Kap Ryong, and my orderly, Jo Wal Nam, accompanied me on these rides. I always came across a singing squad of Children's Corps members on the road, and their song delighted and refreshed my mind.

How can I adequately describe the feeling of satisfaction I felt as I sat there on horseback and looked at those healthy, vivacious faces with pink cheeks! I did not skip my ride even on snowy or rainy days for I wanted to see them. I thought how they would miss me if they did not see me on the road, when they had come out in spite of the rain and snow. Their feelings were the same as mine, they took their stroll in all weathers. Kum Sun always led the chorus. In that unharmonious ringing chorus made up of scores of voices we could easily single out Kum Sun's peculiar chirping voice. And when I heard that voice I felt a sense of security, and a rather superstitious belief that everything would go smoothly in the guerrilla zone, although I could not say why.

But one day I did not hear her voice among the chorus of the pupils of the Children's Corps school shaking the valley in

Lishugou. Feeling that I was listening to a strange song sung by children from some other region, I went out into the yard of the headquarters. The singing squad was just passing a small lane near the headquarters. Kum Sun was standing at the head of the squad as always. She was plodding along without singing, with her head lowered for some reason. Ri Min Hak, the head of the Children's Corps, was leading the chorus that morning in her place. The singing squad without Kum Sun's leadership was just like a chorus troupe deprived of its leading singer.

That day I could not settle down to work. I went to the school shortly before sunset to see her, and there I heard the sad news that her family in Wangougou had all been killed by the enemy. I realized why she had marched with the singing squad with her mouth closed and why Ri Min Hak had to lead the chorus in her place. That day she rested her head on my lap and cried so bitterly that she nearly fainted. Trembling like a sparrow soaked in water, she said, "What can I do? What is the point of living when my father, mother and younger brother have all been killed?"

It was difficult to console her. I stayed at the school until it became dark, trying to calm her down.

"Steady yourself, Kum Sun. If you waver, and give in to grief, the enemy will try to kill you as well. The Japanese swine are trying to wipe out the Koreans in Jiandao. But we cannot let them take our lives so easily. In spite of everything, you must grow up to be a fine revolutionary and take revenge on the enemy."

Only then did she stop crying and look up at me, wiping away

the tears.

"I will have my revenge on the enemy, as you have said."

After this she became a girl of few words, and she did not laugh easily. Indeed, she seldom laughed aloud or raised her voice to chatter as before. When leading the chorus she no longer chirped like a sparrow as she had done in earlier days. Her lovable nickname, "Macun hawfinch," disappeared from use in Xiaowangqing. The young girl's thoughts of vengeance were expressed in her redoubled devotion to the life of the Children's Corps and the activities of the art troupe.

The art troupe of the Children's Corps, with Kum Sun as its main pillar, conducted brisk activities in such enemy-controlled areas as Shixian and Huimudong in Tumen. The fame of the Wangqing children's art troupe extended as far as north Manchuria and beyond the boundaries of east Manchuria.

In those days the communists in east and north Manchuria maintained close contact with each other across the Laoyeling Mountains. The natural barriers of the mountain terrain could not prevent the communists in the two regions from constantly visiting each other, and assisting each other.

The guerrilla bases which had transformed Jiandao into a stronghold of the struggle against Japan had become a model of the ideal land for which all the people yearned, and the new society and order established in these bases aroused the neighbouring people's admiration and envy, they dreamed of a similar life. In particular, the battle of the Dongning county town

was a turning-point in raising the prestige of the communists among the people and armed units in Manchuria. After this battle, the NSA soldiers began to call me "Commander Kim," and in general it was from that time that people began to call me "General Kim" and "Commander Kim." All the policies and democratic measures we put into practice in the guerrilla zones were addressed to the primary concerns of the times, and enjoyed the blessings of all the people.

On several occasions the party organizations and military departments in north Manchuria sent visitors' groups to the guerrilla zones in Wangqing and its vicinity in order to learn about the experience of the people in east Manchuria in building guerrilla zones.

The centre of Wangqing in those days was not Xiaowangqing; it was Yaoyinggou. Kum Sun and the other members of the children's art troupe left Macun when, after the enemy's large-scale "punitive" invasion, all the structures of the guerrilla zone moved simultaneously to Yaoyinggou. I also moved there with some army units in the spring of 1934.

In the summer of the same year a visitors' group from Ningan County, consisting of underground organization members and guerrillas, and led by Im Yong Ju, a woman secretary of the YCL, came to Duitoulazi from Badaohezi via Shenxiandong. The local people and guerrillas in Yaoyinggou gave the visitors a warm welcome. The Children's Corps members shouted, "A warm welcome to the visitors' group from north Manchuria!" and waved

triangular red flags. In the evening a bonfire was lit in the yard of the guerrilla quarters and a performance was staged for the group. The children's art troupe staged a varied programme for the guests, for they had many Children's Corps members with exceptional artistic skills. Ri Min Hak was good at dancing and playing the harmonica. When he played a humourous part in a drama the audience split their sides laughing. Kim Jae Bom was also a talented dancer. He was especially skilled at imitating the gait of a duck or a rabbit while he was dancing.

These children staged their performances and disseminated songs, roving through every revolutionary organizational district in Wangqing County.

We made dancing-dresses for the art troupe from the best silk cloth among the trophies we had captured, and also solved the problem of providing other stage costumes for them.

While staying in Yaoyinggou for some days, a small unit of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, sent by Zhou Bao-zhong, learned of the experience gained by the Wangqing guerrilla unit. This was not a simple tourist trip, more like training which combined drill and practice. Throughout the days of their stay they followed the daily schedule we had defined, and engaged in military drill, political study and cultural activities, just as the Wangqing unit did.

We gave the YCL and Children's Corps organizations assignments to pay visits to their quarters regularly. When, after much practice, the children's art troupe managed to teach the soldiers revolutionary songs in Chinese, the soldiers in turn taught

the children some interesting Chinese songs. On some days the children would visit them, having prepared a drama in the Chinese language.

The guests from north Manchuria were impressed by the activities of the children's art troupe, and would invite the children to their quarters whenever they cooked delicious food.

On returning to north Manchuria, they publicized the children's art troupe very widely.

In the summer of 1934, Zhou Bao-zhong invited the children's art troupe of Wangqing to north Manchuria. We readily complied with his request. I told Pak Kil Song that he should make good preparations for the tour in order to delight the soldiers and people of north Manchuria. Then I framed a detailed itinerary for the art troupe's activities in north Manchuria.

We sent the art troupe to north Manchuria in order to bring the Chinese people some happiness and further consolidate our solidarity with them.

Zhou Bao-zhong's invitation to the children's art troupe was aimed at educating the men and officers of the Chinese nationalist army units which were then under the influence of the communists. Zhou Bao-zhong, who was working as the chief administrative officer of the Suining Anti-Japanese Allied Army, which was organized in the area around Ningan, was making tireless efforts to rally the anti-Japanese forces that had dropped out of Wang De-lin's national salvation army.

After sending the art troupe to north Manchuria I felt ill at

ease for some days. My mind was never free of the worry that the young ones might not reach their destination in safety, though they were well used to battles, hunger and all sorts of hardships. It would be difficult for all of the children, but how could the young ones like Kum Sun negotiate the steep Laoyeling Mountains? However, I need not have worried. All the members of the art troupe were young eagles trained in the maelstrom, indomitable fighters who had many times braved the threat of death.

They easily crossed the mountains which I had considered an impassable barrier, and passed safely through the area infested by bandits. When it was raining, they marched on, wearing pine twigs or the birch-bark on their heads instead of umbrellas. At night they would cook rice for themselves in canteens, took a light meal and then slept in the open air by the campfire, with guards posted. Some children suffered serious stomach troubles deep in the mountains. Worse still, their route of march was not the highroad between Wangqing and Laoyeling, along which ox-carts and sleighs had passed, but a steep short cut used only by the guerrilla army messengers. And yet not a single straggler appeared among them on the hundred-mile-long journey. I was told that even Kum Sun, the youngest in the troupe, climbed over the mountains by herself, singing as she went and rejecting the other children's offer to take her knapsack.

In later years Kim Ok Sun, who went to north Manchuria with her, used to amuse me with tales about their activities among the

NSA units, whenever she had an opportunity.

The curtain rose on the children's art troupe's premiere at Chai Shi-rong's unit, stationed in Machang. Chai was the man most under the influence of the communists among the leaders of the Chinese national salvation army units. If we educated him in a somewhat more efficient way, we could easily make an ally of him, and there was even a chance of making him into a communist.

The premiere in Machang began with a speech by Kum Sun. As many as 150 officers and men enjoyed the performance together with Chai Shi-rong and they were most impressed. As Kum Sun finished her speech, they could not conceal their excitement, and said, "How well that little girl speaks! We must fight against Japan all the more bravely for the sake of that girl."

Commander Chai was so moved that he took her to his room, set her on his lap and put earrings and bracelets on her ears and wrists. He even provided two coaches for the art troupe so that they could travel to their performances.

The tour of performances, which had been scheduled to last for one week, was prolonged several times at the request of the Chinese nationalist soldiers. The art troupe also staged a performance at Zhou Bao-zhong's unit.

Chai Shi-rong presented them with two cartloads of gifts, including padded coats, *dabushanzi*, scarves, pork, chicken, dried starch noodles and wheat flour. He also gave each of the children a satchel and presented them with some rifles.

When the art troupe returned to Yaoyinggou from the tour, I was in another region with my unit. As soon as I returned to the guerrilla zone, the children came and stood around me in a circle and boasted of the gifts they had received in north Manchuria.

"These were all given to us by a man called Commander Chai. He had a beard like Lenin, and he was very kind-hearted. I went to his room and had some trotters. Mr. Zhou Bao-zhong also gave us many gifts."

This was how Kum Sun praised Commander Chai and Zhou Bao-zhong; she set a 7-shooter at my side, saying, "You should keep this revolver, General. We've decided."

She emphasized the word "decided," but as soon as she had finished she laughed at herself for some reason I did not understand. I carried the revolver for a few days in case the children should feel disappointed; then I quietly gave it to the leader of the young volunteers' corps. I also ensured that all the other arms were handed over to the young volunteers' corps, and the other gifts dealt with as the children's art troupe wished.

That autumn a miraculous rumour that Kum Sun's mother was still alive spread throughout the Yaoyinggou guerrilla zone. When she heard the rumour Kum Sun romped about the valley in Yaoyinggou with scores of daisies in her hair; the people in the guerrilla base who knew her family's story were delighted to see this.

The Children's Corps organization decided to help her to realize her wish to see her mother. At first Kum Sun who knew only too

well what her duty was and had a high sense of collective responsibility, was not willing to accept the assistance of the organization, saying that she alone could not enjoy such special favour, when many other children also wanted to see their parents.

I saw her for the last time in the autumn of 1934 when our unit was making preparations for the north Manchuria expedition in Zhuanjiaolou. The children's art troupe came to that region and staged an art performance. I think it was a special performance bidding farewell to the expeditionary force. After the performance we caught a roe deer and made dumplings to treat the art troupe members.

As I was going outside after looking around the house in which they were taking their meal, Kum Sun pushed aside the dishes she had been eating, hurried over to me and whispered in my ear as if telling me a great secret, "I have heard that my mother is alive, General."

"It's true. All the guerrillas are delighted at the news. I am very happy, too."

"I was so happy that I sang a solo three times today. And I wanted to sing still more."

"Then sing as much as you can."

I picked a fine-toothed bamboo comb and a coarse comb from among the trophies I had brought with me to give the children in Zhuanjiaolou and put them in her hand.

"Thank you, General."

She clung to my sleeve as if she were my little child. It was

heartening to observe jubilation in the behaviour and speech of this lovable young girl who had never played on other people's affection in spite of her young age.

"Well, you must go to see your mother soon. I am afraid I cannot see you off, for I have to go to north Manchuria."

That was the last conversation I had with Kum Sun.

When she returned to her school after the art performance in Zhuanjiaolou, the revolutionary organization in Yaoyinggou was looking for a suitable person to transmit a classified document to an enemy-held area. The organization was discussing seriously on the problem of who would be safest and most appropriate as a messenger. Eventually, Kum Sun was selected.

When the organization entrusted her, and nobody else, with this important task, the young girl readily accepted it as an expression of the greatest trust.

On the day she was to leave on the mission, Han Song Hui took the girl to the waterside and washed her face, combed her hair, fastened her shoes, and smoothed down her skirt as she would have done for a bride. She pierced three acorns with a pin and set them in her hair instead of a ribbon. That day the Children's Corps members accompanied her to the edge of the village to see her off.

Where are you going to?
I am going to Yanji.
Which hill are you crossing?
I am crossing Jiqing Pass.

Why are you going there?
I am going on a mission.
Whom are you going with?
I am going alone.

She walked with short steps through the forest, humming a song. She made up the words as she walked along. The others laughed, clapping their hands, to hear the song, and echoed her words in a chorus which reverberated across the valley of Yaoyinggou.

After delivering the message she was arrested, together with several adults, by Japanese gendarmes while on her way to see her mother. They were surely delighted to learn that she was from the guerrilla zone, and thought that the “kid communist” would let out important information. Apparently they discovered that she had come from Yaoyinggou, and thought they might be able to drag confidential information out of her, since the leadership structures of east Manchuria were situated in Yaoyinggou.

It was in fact true that she knew secrets about many aspects of the guerrilla zone. She knew a great deal about the movements of the revolutionary army, the activities of the leadership, the secret routes connecting the guerrilla zone to the semi-guerrilla zones, the living conditions and attitudes of the people in the base, and so forth. Since, as a member of the art troupe, she had performed on many occasions in enemy-held areas, they might be able to squeeze information out of her about the underground

organizations if they could break her. Aware of their opportunity, they did their best to extract valuable information from her. At first they treated her to delicious foods and cajoled her with sweet words. Then they intimidated her and tortured her.

I once read a foreign story about a boy living in a village on an island who was executed by his father because he was tempted by a silver watch and revealed the whereabouts of a man who had been hiding in a haystack. As the story suggests, it is easy to persuade a child. Children can be tempted by things or give in to threats or torture.

But children who have been trained politically through the organizational life do not disgrace their honour. Not a single member of the Children's Corps ever abandoned his or her political creed for a penny. So Kang Ryom, Ri Hon Su and Rim Hyong Sam, who grew up under the care of our Party after liberation, were all young boys of 13-15 years, but they did not reveal the secrets of their organizations even when threatened by the enemy's bayonets during the Fatherland Liberation War.

Kum Sun was an indomitable young fighter tempered like steel in the flames of the anti-Japanese revolution. This young daughter of Korea refused to speak even under cruel torture. She only opened her mouth to condemn and curse the hangmen.

The provost officer who was interrogating her said, "We will kill you if you don't say anything."

"How nasty you are! I will not speak with bandits," Kum Sun answered.

The merciless hangmen decided to kill young Kum Sun for the sole reason that she would not confess the secrets of the revolutionary army. All the people, who saw the young girl from the guerrilla zone, covered in blood and gore, dragged to the place of execution, gritted their teeth in indignation. That field in Baicaogou became a sea of tears. But Kum Sun shouted to these mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters who felt such sympathy and pity for her, "Why are you crying, dear fathers and mothers? Don't cry. The revolutionary army soldiers will surely wipe out the enemy. You must fight staunchly until the day when the motherland is liberated!"

Her fiery speech summed up the nine years of her life. The execution site rang to her sharp cry, "Down with the Japanese imperialists! Long live the Korean revolution!"

After hearing that she had been killed, I did not visit the Children's Corps school for some time. I somehow felt afraid of going to the school. It was too sad and depressing to think of the Children's Corps school and children's art troupe without Kum Sun. The enemy had deprived me of the butterfly spirit of the art troupe and the skylark voice of the guerrilla zone, who had been loved so well by the Wangqing people.

Who would now sing as sweetly as Kum Sun and who would dance as briskly, lightly and gracefully as she for the people in the guerrilla zone as they fought bloody battles and combatted grave difficulties? Who would enchant the officers and men of the Chinese national salvation army with fluent Chinese songs, as

Kum Sun had done, and who would cast me such a lively, bright and lovable smile as she did when I went for my morning ride?

The sad news of the death of Kum Sun perturbed the revolutionary masses in the Wangqing area. A solemn ceremony in her memory was held in Yaoyinggou. Enraged young men and women from all the counties of east Manchuria joined the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in swearing to take revenge upon the enemy.

A magazine connected with the Communist International and Chinese and Japanese publications vied in reporting the achievements of this young heroine unprecedented in the history of the liberation struggle of the oppressed nations in the world. Her heroic life was retold under the title of *Short Biography of a Young Girl Martyr*. The skylark of the guerrilla zone, Kum Sun, who had tirelessly crossed many torrents and mountains on her tiny feet, thus shook the world at the age of nine.

In the modern history of our country there is a famous patriotic girl martyr, called Ryu Kwan Sun. The mention of her name recalls the March First Movement of the year 1919. The girl was a scholar at the Rihwa School in Seoul, but she went back to her native district in Chonan, South Chungchong Province, when the school was forced to close in the wake of the March First Movement; there she organized a demonstration for independence and led it from the front before being arrested by the Japanese gendarmes.

The court sentenced her to a heavy penalty of 7 years'

imprisonment. In view of the fact that the terms of servitude given to 33 people who had initiated the movement were 3 years at the maximum and 1 year at the minimum, and the fact that some of them had been found not guilty, we can see how seriously the Japanese judiciary regarded the 16-year-old girl's case of felony. Even the peasants in remote areas were aghast, saying that seven years was the longest term of penal servitude in the history of the March First Movement. When she had died in the Sodaemun prison, our nation dubbed her the "Joan of Arc of Korea" and she is still remembered with warm affection.

No such a title has yet been conferred on Kum Sun. For there are no girl heroines of her age and no other girls who have performed exploits comparable to hers. That our nation has a girl heroine such as Kum Sun in addition to Ryu Kwan Sun, the heroine of the March First Movement, is our nation's distinctive source of pride and glory. A novel and film depicting Kum Sun have been produced recently, but this is not enough to preserve all her exploits for posterity. It would not be too much to erect a gold or bronze monument to young heroes or heroines such as Kum Sun.

Kum Sun died at the age of nine, but she is immortal. Though her life was short as a flash of lightning, she had reached the acme of mental development and set a perfect example of an honourable life. While there are many people in the world who have lived for a hundred years and left nothing worth mentioning to their nations, at the age of nine she performed an undying exploit that will be

enshrined in the hearts of coming generations.

It can be regarded as a meritorious deed of the Korean communists to have raised this young heroine of world renown. In the flames of the anti-Japanese revolution we communists trained many children into young heroes and heroines, including Kim Kum Sun, Jon Ki Ok, Mok Un Sik, Kang Ryong Nam, Pak Myong Suk, Pak Ho Chol, Ho Jong Suk, Ri Kwang Chun, Kim Tuk Bong and others. They were all young martyrs thrown up during the tempest of the anti-Japanese revolution.

"Don't kill me by shooting, but with bayonets, and send the bullets to the guerrilla army."

This was what Jon Ki Ok, a member of the Children's Corps in Hunchun, who was arrested by the enemy while transmitting a message, said to the puppet Manchukuo policemen in the last moment of his life at the execution site. Even the firing squad was moved by his noble revolutionary spirit in placing the guerrilla army and victory in the anti-Japanese war above his own life and health even amid the dreadful tension and fear of death just prior to execution.

This brilliant feat by the mere boy, Mok Un Sik, is worth broadcasting to the whole world. On his way from Yongchangdong to Pinggang, carrying a secret message in his straw sandal, he was interrogated by the enemy at a guard post on the Jiqing Pass. The guards who were desperately searching his body for secrets suddenly tried to pull the straw sandal off his left foot. At this he pushed aside the self-defence corps man who was

interrogating him and rushed straight into the post, where he thrust his right leg into the oven–the message was in the straw sandal on his right foot. The enemy, realizing the reason for his action, beat him to a pulp in the attempt to draw him away from the oven. But despite the enemy's kicks and blows, he kept a firm grasp of the oven and did not take his foot out of fire. His straw sandal, his foot and his trouser leg were all burned. The enemy took him to a hospital and gave him an injection to bring him round, for he had lost consciousness. Their attempts to extract secrets from him were truly unrelenting. But Mok Un Sik breathed his last without revealing the secret he kept in his mind.

All the members of the Children's Corps and the Children's Vanguard who assisted in the anti-Japanese armed struggle were heroes and heroines, representing the youngest element of the first generation of our revolution.

Our revolution still regards the Children's Union, along with the League of Socialist Working Youth, as a dependable reserve for the Workers' Party. This is why we build our palaces for children with all the precious things in the country and spare nothing for the education of the younger generation. I still tell the officials today to take loving care of the younger generation, and emphasize time and again that the children are the kings of our country. A revolution which does not love and care for the children has no future. It is foolish to expect that such a revolution will attain its glorious ideal.

Today an epidemic of hedonism is cutting a wide swath across

the rest of the globe. The extreme egoism of caring only for oneself and not thinking about the younger generation has encroached very far upon the minds of many people. Some of them do not have children, alleging that they are a nuisance, and others give up the thought of marrying. Needless to say, it is a matter of personal choice whether one gets married or has children. But what pleasure is there in living without the younger generation?.

The revisionists, who are addicted to extreme egoism and hedonism, are not taking care of the younger generation; they are disarming them spiritually and exposing them to all sorts of social evils. If the teenagers wail and lament at the chaos of reality, and bear a grudge against their parents, people in power and the world in general, then the revolution of that country has no future or its prospects are at best gloomy.

But when the officials spare no time, money, passion or effort for the sake of the future generation, our revolution will produce more children like Kim Kum Sun, Jon Ki Ok and Mok Un Sik.

As the family of a famous revolutionary, Kum Sun's family suffered terrible ordeals in the maelstrom of the anti-Japanese war. Her father, who was the head of the underground revolutionary organization in Wangougou, was falsely accused of being a member of the "Minsaengdan" and was killed. Her mother died a heroic death in the battlefield, fighting with a rifle in her hands to defend the guerrilla base. When her father was alive I gave him many difficult secret assignments. He was a man of strong will

who carried through the tasks he had been entrusted with to the end. Five members of her family, including herself, were killed. How very similar their fate is to that of Ryu Kwan Sun's family!

This cruel and merciless destiny, however, did leave an heir to the lifeblood of this laudable family. The girl's two-year-old younger brother, whom her mother had left in the care of villagers before she went to her death in the battlefield, miraculously survived.

It was Kim Jong Il, Secretary for Organizational Affairs, who identified Kim Kum Sun's younger brother and reported it to me. At that time her brother, Kim Ryang Nam, was working as a music compiler at the documentary film studio after graduating from the university of music and dance. He had read in some publication that his father was executed on a charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan," and this knowledge had distressed him. He had been afraid that his father's dishonourable death might cause a public scandal.

I assured him that his father had been a faithful revolutionary, not a member of the "Minsaengdan."

From then, he worked as an official of the Party Central Committee, giving guidance in the field of art and literature and energetically assisting Secretary Kim Jong Il in his work. Like his sister, he was endowed with musical talent and intense ardour. The cowboy of yesterday, who plaintively lamented the surging sorrow of a ruined people on a grass harp, devoted his heart and soul to creating operas from the original revolutionary musical art.

Kim Ryang Nam was one of the people who rendered distinguished service in the creation of the Mansudae Art Troupe and its development into one of the world's first troupes under the personal guidance of Secretary Kim Jong Il. In February 1971, the Mansudae Art Troupe gave a historic first performance in the Western Hemisphere, in Cuba, thousands of miles away from our motherland. At that time, Kim Ryang Nam was guiding the troupe as deputy head for political affairs.

Secretary Kim Jong Il always felt pity for Kim Ryang Nam's sad past: as the only heir to Kim Kum Sun's family, who had been nourished on other women's milk and spent his childhood and boyhood as other's servant. Kim Jong Il took particularly loving care of him, as though he were his own flesh and blood. When he contracted a fatal disease, Kim Jong Il organized an efficient medical team to provide him with intensive medical treatment round the clock; he also transmitted his diagnosis to our embassies in foreign countries in order to obtain adequate supplies of expensive medicines, and sent special airplanes to countries which were said to have a developed pharmaceutical industry.

Kim Ryang Nam underwent operations 10 times and this intensive care lengthened the span of his lifetime by almost two years.

Kim Ryang Nam died at the age of 40, which means he lived more than four times as long as his sister. But measured with the standard of our times, when there are so many people who live to a

great age, his lifetime was short and he died too early. The ancient philosophy which says that "The good die young" must be regarded as out of keeping with the principles of life for the sake of many Kim Kum Suns and Kim Ryang Nams who are still living in this world. Kim Ryang Nam's second son recently graduated from the faculty of composition of the Pyongyang University of Music and Dance, which his father attended, and began creating musical pieces for the Mansudae Art Troupe. He is now singing the same revolutionary songs his grandfather, grandmother, aunt and father used to sing.

In this way our revolution, pioneered in blood by the forerunners, is inherited and wonderfully improved through the generations. Though Kum Sun is dead, her mettle and soul are still alive pulsating in the minds of the younger generation powerfully as they did in the days of her innocent childhood when she was romping about the valleys in Macun and Yaoyinggou.

CHAPTER 9

The First Expedition to North Manchuria

The Korean People's Revolutionary Army

The Haves and the Have-nots

Crossing the Laoyeling Mountains

The Sound of the Mouthorgan
Ringing across Ningan

The Snowstorm in the Tianqiaoling Mountains

In the Bosom of the People

October 1934–February 1935

1. The Korean People's Revolutionary Army

It is elementary political knowledge that where there are people, there is a state and where there is a state, there is an armed force. Except for a few such special countries as Monaco, nearly all countries, large and small, have their own national armed forces for self-defence. The reason why many small and weak nations surrendered their sovereignty under the threat of a few volleys of gunfire from the colonialists and were obliged to become their slaves for hundreds of years was that they had had no armed forces or very weak ones.

The armed force of Ri dynasty, too, was annihilated, it was incapable of defending the country. This armed force, which had been so heinous in the suppression of rebels, reviled the foreign aggressors for some time, but did not fire a single gun before yielding. The ruin of our country can be ascribed to this inefficient armed force as well as to the corrupt government.

In order to win back the sovereignty of the country, the patriots of Korea organized the Independence Army. It is inevitable that

the nation which has been deprived of its sovereignty will organize its armed force for its restoration. The nationalists organized the Independence Army and conducted armed resistance for many years, and the Korean communists organized the guerrilla army and dealt a heavy blow at the Japanese imperialist aggressors. Our small secret armed force, which started the long march of the anti-Japanese struggle, had now developed into an army with a regimental force in each county in Jiandao.

After repulsing the enemy's winter "punitive" operations, we realized very keenly the need to reorganize the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army into a people's revolutionary army and we discussed this matter seriously with the commanding officers of the guerrilla units in other regions. In the light of the prevailing situation merging the guerrilla regiments in the different counties into a single command was a pressing need, and the natural course of development of the AJPGA itself. Reorganizing the AJPGA into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was a revolutionary measure which would improve its combat efficiency and counter the large-scale offensive of the Japanese imperialists more effectively by providing a unified command for the enlarged guerrilla forces. At the meeting at Mingyuegou the need for a large revolutionary force became the subject of our discussion. When discussing the future of the AJPGA there, we agreed that at the initial stage we should organize guerrilla battalions, develop their quantity and quality for some time, and then in due course reorganize them into a larger revolutionary force. Of course this

matter was not a major item on the agenda at that meeting. However, the delegates had heated discussions about the future of the revolutionary armed force both within and outside the meeting. The most ardent proponents of the idea of large revolutionary forces were O Pin and Pak Hun.

It is a common practice in colonies or semi-colonial countries for the armed forces of resistance to be organized on a small scale initially, expanded with gradual stealth and, when conditions are ripe, unified into a command. At the initial stage, when it returned from exile in Mexico, Fidel Castro's unit had 82 soldiers, of whom only 12 men survived. These people, equipped with seven rifles, went into the Sierra Maestra Mountains, developed their strength by expanding their ranks, and then attacked Havana, toppling the pro-US dictatorial regime of Batista as swiftly as lightning.

In the latter half of 1933, the merger of the guerrilla forces in Jiandao into a unified command became a major topic of discussion as a result of the lessons of Operation Macun for repulsing the enemy's winter "punitive" operations and the heroic battle fought in defence of tens of thousands of square miles of territory.

At the meeting to review operations, it was not the commanders of the 2nd company and 3rd company, who had fought with us throughout the 90-day defence of Xiaowangqing, but company commander Han Hung Gwon, who had been far away from the zone of operations, who spoke fervently about the need for cooperation between various companies and the merger of units.

Han Hung Gwon said that the mission of his company in Operation Macun had been to contain a possible enemy advance to east Manchuria across the Laoyeling, but his company had not fought a single battle with the enemy, rendering no assistance to the main force in fighting. In other words, he implied that his company had not been able to attack the enemy from behind as it should during the enemy's "punitive" attack on the guerrilla zones.

I thought a lot as I listened to his speech. His speech was self-critical, but he was not to blame in any way. He was an efficient commander who had carried out his mission in a responsible way.

Why did he criticize himself as being a commander lacking in dedication, revolutionary principle and insight? In short, what was he attempting to emphasize during the review? While he accused himself of shortsightedness, I, as his superior, drew a serious lesson from Operation Macun. The lesson was that, in order to organize harmonious cooperation between companies in accordance with the ever-changing combat situation, we needed an adequate command and staff structure and this required a unified system of command. His opinion was, after all, that the people's guerrilla forces against the Japanese should be merged into one well-regulated command system.

Throughout the fight to frustrate the enemy's attack the guerrilla forces, operating separately in many places, fought separately, without any cooperation with their neighbours or any assistance from them.

In Helong County, for instance, the enemy was said to have

launched his “clean-up” of the guerrilla base in Yulangcun in early November 1933. His first attempt had been checked for some time by a fierce counterattack and his second “punitive” operation had lasted only for three days, from the end of November. That was all the fighting they had there. As the time of action shows, the enemy’s “punitive” operations in Yulangcun had started about 15 days earlier than his attack on Xiaowangqing. If at this time the guerrillas in other counties, who had not been engaged, had attacked the enemy’s rear on the principle of mutual assistance, it would have been much easier for the guerrillas in Yulangcun to repel the enemy.

The circumstances in Yanji and Hunchun Counties were much the same.

What did this mean? It showed, though belatedly, that since the guerrilla zones were subject to enemy attack at different periods, all the guerrilla forces could have made their struggle easier by coordinating their actions through efficient cooperation, if only they had had a unified command and staff system for the guerrilla units in all guerrilla zones and counties.

However, in the circumstances of that time, when the guerrilla units were directed within the framework of each county and each district, such voluntary, active cooperation was impossible. The command system of the guerrilla army at the time of the enemy’s winter “punitive” operations was therefore limited in its response to the demands of the situation. Until that time the guerrilla units were under the command of the military departments of the party

committees at various levels. Since the battles in the early days of the guerrilla movement, when only one or two companies existed in each county, were fought on a small scale, this system of commanding the army on a district and county basis was not so bad.

However, as the ranks of the guerrilla army expanded and the enemy's "punitive" forces multiplied from hundreds to tens of thousands, it became impossible to choose to fight only small-scale battles. A battle is not always fought by the choice of one of the belligerent forces. When the enemy provoked us to battle by continuously reinforcing his forces, we could not but fight against him.

While the enemy was attacking us in large numbers by mobilizing this or that division, this or that brigade and this or that regiment from several directions, we were scattered in this valley or that one and we fought, without either combining our forces or helping our neighbours; should we be obliged to continue to fight in this way in the future, too? When attacking a large city or a town, we concentrated our forces by selecting men from each county; why should we fight defensive battles with a county or guerrilla zone as our unit of force? This was the idea that obsessed me before and after Operation Macun.

In a nutshell, the guerrilla movement required a new form of armed force corresponding to the content and scope of the movement. It was necessary for us to take radical measures to bring the armed units dispersed in the counties and districts under

a single system. The quickest way of meeting this requirement was to merge the anti-Japanese people's guerrilla forces into a large revolutionary army.

A letter from the commander of the 4th company in Yaoyinggou also seemed to suggest this. Circumstances prevented the commander from attending the summing-up meeting of Operation Macun, so he reviewed the work of his company in a letter and sent it to Macun. O Jin U, the company commander's orderly, brought that letter to us. During the review of Operation Macun I gave deep thought to the matter of merging the anti-Japanese people's guerrilla forces.

I discussed it with Ju Jin, Ryang Song Ryong and others on several occasions.

Once I went to Ryang Song Ryong's house and played the guitar there. I did not do it because I was merry or free from anxiety. Frankly speaking, I felt gloomy at that time. Though Operation Macun had ended in victory for us, the guerrilla zone was suffering heartbreaking anguish. Many people who had shared their life and fate with us had been killed. It was not easy to rebuild houses on the ruins and make a new life.

When I visited Ryang Song Ryong to discuss military matters, he greeted me with a gloomy face. The battalion commander of yesterday was still furious with anger for he had been detained on a false charge of being a member of the "Minsaengdan." Thanks to our guarantee, he had not been given a prison term, but he had also not been reinstated in his former position. He was operating

between Xiaowangqing and Luozigou to obtain food grain; after being bereaved of his wife and mother by the enemy's "mopping-up" operation, he had become a man of few words.

When I brought up the matter of organizing a large-scale revolutionary army, he immediately lit up and expressed exceptional enthusiasm. He said, "I think the point in question is just how to merge the units."

He said nothing about whether he agreed or disagreed with me, but he expressed his approval by bringing up the possible means and forms of merger for discussion. What worried him most was whether some people of a chauvinistic mentality, who were crazy about the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle, would accept the idea.

It was no wonder that he should feel uneasy about it. This was the painful position the Korean communists found themselves in, and the special circumstances required that the difficulties be smoothed over prudently.

In those days "international lines," formulated on the basis of their own principles and according to their own yardsticks for assessing all the problems of the communist movement and the national liberation struggle, were imposed upon us as authoritative, while national traditions and aspirations were sharply attacked as a nationalist tendency, in the name of so-called class interest and international solidarity. In this situation, it was not easy for the Korean communists who were building up their revolution in a foreign country to put into practice a plan for establishing their own independent armed force.

Ju Jin also approved of the idea of merging and reorganizing the anti-Japanese people's guerrilla forces into a large revolutionary army. As soon as I broached this matter, Ju Jin, who was open-hearted and generous, gesticulated forcefully and said that we should merge our units and fight big battles. I was very much pleased by his words about "big battles." It was very pleasant to hear such words from Ju Jin, a gallant man whom the Korean people in Jiandao loved and valued as one of their own. He went on to say that when the Koreans organized an independent revolutionary army by merging their armed units, they would be accused of "extending the revolution to Korea," but they should push ahead with this work as quickly as possible without paying any heed to such accusations.

Tong Chang-rong also supported our plan. He said: The AJPGA organized in east Manchuria is an armed force formed on the initiative of the Korean communists and Koreans form the overwhelming majority of its ranks; though it was organized on the territory of China, it should ultimately develop into a Korean revolutionary armed force for carrying out the Korean revolution.

Tong Chang-rong's evaluation was very fair and progressive at a time when the very mention of the Korean revolution was stigmatized as nationalism.

As he rightly pointed out, the Korean communists, such as Ri Hong Gwang and Ri Tong Gwang in south Manchuria and Ho Hyong Sik, Kim Chaek, Ri Hak Man and Choi Yong Kun in north Manchuria, to say nothing of those in east Manchuria, had played

the roles of pioneers, advocates and leaders in the building up of armed force in the region of Manchuria, just as they had taken the lead in building up the party organizations there. And the overwhelming majority of the commanding officers and men of the armed force were Korean communists.

Tong Chang-rong advised me that, when forming an army, we should employ appropriate forms and means so as to support and supplement each other and consolidate our cooperation with the Chinese communists and that, by doing this, we would bring benefits both to Korea and China.

Pan, the inspector from the Comintern, gave full support to our idea, saying that it was a correct policy in keeping with the line of the Comintern.

Everyone capable of logical reasoning, from Ryang Song Ryong, who led the Wangqing battalion with me, to Ju Jin, who later became the commander of the 1st Independent Division of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, Tong Chang-rong, from the east Manchuria ad hoc committee, and Pan, inspector of the Comintern, reached a full consensus on the policy of merging and reorganizing the anti-Japanese people's guerrilla forces into a large revolutionary army. And we were in general of the same opinion concerning the name and nature of the armed force which would be reorganized.

In March 1934, we formally proposed the policy of reorganizing the AJPGA into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, in full accord with our objectives and the character of the

political force which would struggle for them.

The names used by the AJPGA in some areas of east Manchuria in its early days—the Worker-Peasant Guerrilla Army—had placed extreme emphasis of its class character, and it did not conform with the character of our revolution, the primary task of which we had defined as national liberation and independence before social emancipation, nor did it conform with the character of the revolution in northeastern China directed by the Chinese communists.

As a preparation for reorganizing the anti-Japanese guerrilla forces into the people's revolutionary army, the Korean communists in east Manchuria, shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese communists, developed the guerrilla battalions in each county into regiments. In this way, all the guerrilla forces in Jiandao were regrouped into five regiments. In every regiment we set up a political department, whose mission it was to give party guidance to the army, a staff in charge of operations, reconnaissance and communications, and a supply department dealing with clothing, food and medicines.

The Wangqing regiment was the first to be reorganized and this was followed by others in east Manchuria. That was the first stage of reorganization.

The objective we set at the second stage was to form divisions.

During the days of Operation Macun we had felt very keenly the need to form divisions. Offering resistance to a large armed force of 5,000 men with only two companies was a feat

unprecedented in the history of war. As we broke through the difficulties created in the guerrilla zone by harassing the enemy with a small unit behind his lines, I used to think how happy we would be if we had forces on the divisional level, if not on the corps level, and how high our spirits would be if we conducted activities with large units and fired thousands of guns as one force!

Since regiments had already been organized in each county and their ranks were expanding quickly, the next thing to do was to form divisions without delay. That was the most important task of the moment.

Our objective was to organize first two divisions and one independent regiment under the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and then build on this success more divisions in the future. With this objective in mind, we organized a division out of the regiments in Yanji and Helong, and another division made up mainly of regiments in Hunchun and Wangqing.

In the course of this reorganization, the party committee of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was established as a new party guidance body. The party committee was entrusted with the onerous task of giving guidance to local party organizations as well as those in the army, because the local party organizations could not protect or maintain themselves if they were not supported by force of arms. In earlier times local party organizations had guided the party organizations in the army.

The work of reorganizing the AJPGA into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was carried out in a very short space of

time—from March to May 1934.

When they heard about this, the people in the guerrilla zones vied with each other in helping the army and prepared grand celebrations in every zone. The women in Wangqing made congratulatory banners and sent them to us; the YCL organization there staged a congratulatory performance by the children's art troupe and organized an athletic meet. In Sandaowan guerrilla zone in Yanji, a mass meeting and a demonstration attended by more than 1,000 people were held and delegates from the enemy-controlled areas participated in those events. The people were even further convinced of the bright future of national liberation by the formation of the KPRA, and they firmly resolved to rise up as one body with the army in the anti-Japanese revolutionary war.

The reorganization of the AJPGA into the KPRA opened up a broad highway towards the development of large-force operations in a wider area. Had we not reorganized the AJPGA into the KPRA, or had we not created in good time the large units of regiments and divisions, we could not have lit the torch in Pochonbo, which illuminated the darkness of the motherland, nor won victory after victory in the battles fought in Fusong, Jiansanfeng, Hongtoushan, Limingshui, Taehongdan, Hongqihe and in other places in the homeland and in Manchuria, when we annihilated the enemy's crack troops. Nor could we have smashed the notorious siege imposed by the enemy upon the guerrilla zones after his "punitive" operations.

Through this reorganization we clearly demonstrated at home

and abroad the will of the Korean nation to liberate their motherland by an armed resistance, no matter what the cost.

If circumstances required, the KPRA operated in the name of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army. We were of the opinion that the word "northeast" did not suggest the name of a country, but, to all intents and purposes, was suggestive of a region. That the KPRA operated in the name of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army, not in the name of the Manchurian People's Revolutionary Army or the Chinese People's Revolutionary Army, was also compatible with the objectives of the Chinese comrades who were struggling against both Manchukuo and Japan. After all, the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army performed its mission as the KPRA and, at the same time, as a revolutionary armed force rendering support to the anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese cause of the Chinese communists.

The KPRA developed into the most powerful armed force in Jiandao, the eastern frontier region of Manchuria, and the region of the Korean peninsula centring on Mt. Paektu.

The principled stand and prudent political magnanimity the Korean communists had shown in the course of reorganizing the AJPGA into the KPRA contributed greatly in subsequent years to the development of the joint anti-Japanese struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples, and particularly to the development of the armed struggle against the Japanese in northeast China. If we had insisted on an inflexible form and name corresponding only to the

Korean revolution, in disregard of the prevailing subjective and objective situation of that time, the Korean communists would not have launched the anti-Japanese armed struggle in such an effective way, with the extensive support of the Chinese people.

When in later years we organized the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army, we called it by this name when operating in the northeastern region of China—as its character required—and changed its name to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army—in conformity with the specific situation—when operating in areas inhabited mostly by Koreans or in the homeland, so that we lived and fought under the care and protection of the Korean and Chinese peoples everywhere we went.

Even from today's perspective, we consider it a matter of honour and pride that we placed greater emphasis on the essential content of the movement than on any of its formal aspects. Thanks to this principled view and magnanimous stance, we were always able to hold fast to the national character and independence of our struggle, while fulfilling our duty as internationalists and, for this reason, we enjoyed the respect and support of the Chinese comrades and the Communist International.

Publications of those days called the people's revolutionary army organized in Jiandao the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, not as the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army. The *Dongfang Zazhi* (Oriental Magazine—Tr.) published by the Shangwu (Commercial) Publishing House in Shanghai in 1935 wrote, in connection with the guerrilla struggle in northeastern

China, that there was a 3,000-strong Korean People's Revolutionary Army in Jiandao, and this was faithfully reprinted in the *Lives of the Anti-Japanese Martyrs in Northeast China*, published by the National Salvation Publishing House in Paris, France.

It is therefore no wonder that the KPRA was called the 2nd Army Corps after the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army was formed in the later years. The KPRA was, by its nature, an international body of the anti-Japanese allied front of the Korean and Chinese peoples, and the Koreans in the 2nd Army Corps supported the liberation struggle of the Chinese nation under the banner of internationalism, while carrying out their own task of struggling for the independence of Korea.

It was the Japanese imperialist forces of aggression which most feared the formation of the KPRA and its victories in battles in Jiandao, and clamoured most loudly about the danger its existence would cause. In most cases they called our anti-Japanese armed force in east and south Manchuria "Kim Il Sung's army" instead of using its official name.

After the AJPGA had been reorganized into the KPRA, the Anti-Japanese Volunteers' Army in Jiandao, led by Kong Xian-yong, Chai Shi-rong, Shi Zhong-heng, Li San-xia and others, was united with the KPRA, which was renamed the 2nd Army Corps, in order to achieve success in the anti-Japanese joint struggle; this new formation was also called the "Northeast Korean-Chinese People's Revolutionary Army."

In the course of these events, a solid alliance of the anti-Japanese armed forces of Koreans and Chinese was virtually realized in east Manchuria in the first half of the 1930s.

In one of his articles, Zhou Bao-zhong wrote, “The 2nd Army Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army was, at the same time, the ‘Korean People’s Revolutionary Army.’... In the course of the anti-Japanese guerrilla war the Chinese and Korean peoples maintained ties sealed with blood for the sake of their common cause.” Thus he recognized the entity of the KPRA and extolled the alliance of Korean and Chinese armed forces against the Japanese that existed in the course of the historical common struggle.

In this sense the Japanese called the guerrilla army organized in Manchuria, and in Jiandao in particular, the “pure Korean partisans.”

According to the data uncovered by one of our comrades, V. Rappoport, a famous expert on Chinese and Korean affairs in the Soviet Union, contributed an article under the title of “The Partisan Movement in the Northern Area of Korea” to the Soviet international political magazine *The Pacific* in 1937, in which he stated: “The partisan army in Korea has mostly been merged into a unified command, has its own centre and calls itself the people’s revolutionary army.... The expansion of the existing relationship and contact between the Korean and Manchurian partisan armies is setting the Japanese militarists atremble with great unease and, for this reason, Japan is paying serious attention to the border area of Korea.”

The reorganization of the AJPGA into the KPRA did not mean a mere change of name or a technical restructuring. It meant a new stage of army-building, of improving the command system of the guerrilla army and strengthening its ranks both in quantity and quality by following up on its successes and drawing on its experiences after reviewing the path of militant advance traversed by the AJPGA.

After reorganizing the AJPGA into the KPRA, we launched unceasing military actions to frustrate the enemy's siege.

The headquarters of the Kwantung Army and the military authorities in Tokyo, who had suffered defeat in the winter "punitive" operations which they had flaunted as the final "mopping-up," made a great fuss over determining the cause of their failure and deciding who would be answerable for it; then in the spring of 1934, they re-examined their previous scorched-earth tactics and proposed a plan which they called a siege, an even more notorious, new plan for "clean-up." It was an atrocious operation intended to wipe out the guerrilla zones for good by combining military siege and attack, political suppression and economic blockade. We regarded this new invention of the Japanese as a replica of the blockade policy Jiang Jie-shi had pursued when attacking the Soviet zones in China.

While Jiang Jie-shi's blockade policy had been aimed at denying the communist army clothing and food "by producing a subhuman world filled with political terror and economic crisis," the Japanese siege was aimed at killing all the people and soldiers

in the guerrilla zones by shooting and burning and imposing on them death from hunger and cold. To this end, they tried to separate the army and people by building concentration villages and to detect and eliminate all the forces of resistance through the introduction of such medieval collective security systems as the ten-household joint responsibility system and the five-household joint surveillance system.

The blockade policy and siege were similar to each other in their tactical aspects. Jiang Jie-shi's tactics were to refrain from hasty pursuit or from deep penetration after encircling the enemy but to occupy a position and consolidate it slowly, studying the means of holding it, then proceed to an attack of another position. The tactics of "step-by-step occupation" invented by the Japanese can be compared with Jiang's tactics.

Commenting on this, our comrades said, "How wretched the Japanese are! They have to learn from Jiang Jie-shi." This comment was more than just a joke.

In his preparations for the siege from the spring of 1934, the enemy moved a greater number of crack troops of the Kwantung Army and his occupation army in Korea to the areas around the guerrilla bases and reinforced them with puppet Manchukuo army troops.

To cope with a threatening situation in which the enemy was deploying his forces for the purpose of siege, we ensured that the KPRA forces forestalled his attempt by assaulting his military and political strongholds one after another from behind in large-scale

operations, while fighting in defence of the guerrilla zones and, at the same time, expanding the guerrilla zones to more favourable areas. This enabled us to manage the difficult situation on the basis of our initiative, consolidate the victories won at the cost of our blood, and maintain the people's high revolutionary spirit.

The KPRA launched a spring offensive. We raided the areas in Wangqing where the enemy forces were concentrated and the constructing sites of the concentration villages at Xiaobaicaogou, Daduchuan, Shitouhezi and Zhuanjiaolou. Our comrades in Hunchun, Yanji and Helong also attacked the construction sites of the concentration villages, smashing the enemy's attempt to establish a siege in its very first stage.

In order to consolidate the success achieved by the spring offensive and, maintaining the initiative, turn the enemy's attempted siege into a fiasco, we immediately launched a summer offensive. The main purpose of this effort was to expand the guerrilla zones to the northwestern area of Antu County and northeastern area of Wangqing County. Defending a few fixed guerrilla zones while the enemy surrounded us would mean falling into the trap laid by the enemy and assisting his efforts.

The task of expanding the guerrilla zone to the northwestern area of Antu County was entrusted to the 1st Division and the Independent Regiment of the KPRA and the task of expanding it to the northeastern area of Wangqing County to the 2nd Division of the KPRA. While the area of guerrilla activity which connected Dadianzi and Fuerhe was the lifeline of Antu County, the area

including Luozigou, Laomuzhuhe, Taipinggou and Sandaohezi was the lifeline of Hunchun and Wangqing Counties. Being adjacent to the Mudanling and Laoyeling Mountains, these areas were considered ideal for guerrilla activities, and had been developed by veteran soldiers such as Hong Pom Do, Choe Myong Rok, Ri Tong Hui and Hwang Pyong Gil since the days of the Independence Army movement.

We made a plan under which Ju Jin, commander of the 1st Division, and Yun Chang Bom, commander of the Independent Regiment, were to attack the Dadianzi-Fuerhe area first, so as to draw the enemy's attention, and then we were to advance in the direction of Luozigou.

While the attention of the Japanese Kwantung Army was focused on the area around Dadianzi, Antu County, as we had planned it should be, a part of the 4th and 5th Regiments of the 2nd Division of the KPRA and the Chinese nationalist army units advanced to Luozigou and occupied Sandaohezi and Sidaohezi. In Sandaohezi a joint meeting of the KPRA soldiers and 1,500 officers and men of the Chinese units was held. The meeting was in the spirit of an ideological campaign for victory in the battle at Luozigou. Participating in the battle from the side of the Chinese nationalists were units led by Kong Xian-yong, Shi Zhong-heng, Chai Shi-rong and Li San-xia.

Luozigou was a strategic area for the enemy, for it connected Baicaogou in Wangqing County and the Dongning county town. Hundreds of puppet Manchukuo army soldiers led by Wen Chang-

ren, a battalion commander, were stationed there. It had originally been a moderate-sized town of about 500 households, but it had rapidly developed into a military stronghold of the enemy after the September 18 incident, and had become an important base for the Jiandao task force since the spring of 1932. When the task force was withdrawn, the Japanese imperialists shipped a heavily reinforced battalion for use in their siege operation.

Occupying the Luozigou area by means of a preemptive attack was the fundamental link in the overall chain of our efforts to create the conditions for lifting a corner of the siege and expanding new guerrilla zones.

At the house of old man Ri Thae Gyong in Sandaohezi we held a meeting with the leaders of the Chinese units to discuss the plan of operations.

Ri Thae Gyong was a man of high patriotic spirit who had served in both the Righteous Volunteers' Army and the Independence Army. Working with Choe Ja Ik, he had once been a general affairs director of the northern political and military administration. It was said that So Il had nominated him, a simple rank-and-file soldier, as director, because he had been charmed by Ri Thae Gyong's exceptional marksmanship and calligraphy. When So Il had preached the Taejong faith, worshipping *Tangun*, the old man had become a faithful follower of the faith; when Kim Jwa Jin had insisted on the struggle against communism, the old man had supported him and received a revolver from him as a reward for his support. When Kim Jwa Jin had evacuated his

forces to north Manchuria just before the large-scale Japanese "clean-up" in Jiandao, Ri Thae Gyong had followed his seniors as far as Mishan. But after Kim disappeared into the deep forest in Daomugou, Yanji County, he had come to Sidaohezi with his colleagues, buried his weapon, and taken up farming.

The impression of the old man that I can still recall is from when I unfolded a sketch map of the streets of Luozigou to explain the operational plan to the leaders of the Chinese units, and he put a stone on a corner of the map, the corner by the window of his house, lest the map should flap in the wind. The family of Ri called it a blessed stone. It was a peculiar stone, shaped as smooth as an egg. The old man said that when he was a director of the administration in Shiliping a friend of his had given that stone to him before he died, left a will saying he would be blessed if he kept it for a long time.

That stone is now kept in the Korean Revolution Museum. Before he died, the old man handed the stone over to his son to keep as a family treasure, saying that General Kim Il Sung had put it on his operational map and touched it and that he should keep it well. When a group of visitors to the old battlefields of the anti-Japanese armed struggle went to the northeastern region of China in 1959, his son handed the stone over to them. Though he said he disliked communism, the old man spared nothing to help us.

I met this old man for the first time in the summer of 1933 through the introduction of Choe Jong Hwa, the head of the Anti-Japanese Association in Luozigou. I had gone to Sandaohezi on

horseback and was conducting political work among the people there. At that time I had organized an Anti-Japanese Association in Sandaohezi and accepted the old man, who was the elder of the village, as a member of the association. After joining the association he had educated the villagers well and all the villagers had done what he, the elder and the most influential man in the village, had told them to do.

It was more easy to transform a village on revolutionary lines if at least one or two members of the Righteous Volunteers' Army or the Independence Army were living there. For the most part, former soldiers of the Independence Army who, like Ri Thae Gyong, had given up the fight halfway and buried their weapons, retained their patriotism. When they, the hardcore elements, went around one household after another, calling on people to help the revolutionary army soldiers who were suffering in the mountains, everybody responded positively. When the people were asked what they should do when the soldiers came to their village, they replied, "We should cook rice cakes," or "We should kill a calf." Some of the former Independence Army soldiers had betrayed their cause, but such people were few. The vast majority of them led an honest life to their last moment. For this reason, I was careful not to neglect work with the influential veterans of the Independence Army wherever I went. Before anybody else I visited such Independence Army veterans as O Thae Hui in Shixian, Choe Ja Ik in Xidapo, Ri Chi Baek in Macun, Kim Tong Sun in Dongricun and Ri Thae Gyong in Sandaohezi, greeting

them and lying down, heads on wooden pillows, beside them to talk over current affairs.

After liberation some people gave the cold shoulder to the veterans of the Independence Army, alleging that their ideology was different from ours. In those days people with ideologies other than communism were rejected out of hand. At times, narrow-minded people in the area of personnel administration would give them a wide berth, and such rash responses acted like a wet blanket on the united front policy we had consistently adhered to.

Whenever I encountered such people, I would say to them, "It is wicked to ostracize the Independence Army veterans on the grounds that they have different ideology. It is their limitation, but not grounds for guilt, that the soldiers of that army did not become communists. Are you trying to make communists of Chun Hyang and the young nobleman Ri[9]? Even if we are in power, we communists must not fail to appreciate our patriotic seniors. The trend of thought differs from age to age; then why do you ostracize them, guard against them and avoid them? Are they guilty for fighting for Korea's independence at the risk of their lives when others were living with their families in warm houses, eating hot rice? I think that the veterans of the Righteous Volunteers' Army and the Independence Army who fought under arms are more laudable patriots than those who had led a comfortable life in their own houses while earning their own bread. You should realize that you will be forsaken by the people if you ostracize the Independence Army veterans."

On the basis of this view, we enrolled the sons and daughters of the martyrs of the Independence Army in the school for bereaved families of revolutionaries which was built at Mangyongdae. We appointed veterans of the Independence Army who actively supported our line of building a new Korea to official posts according to their abilities. Mr. Kang Jin Gon[10], the first Chairman of the Central Committee of the Peasants' Union of North Korea, and Mr. Ri Yong[11], the Minister of City Management of the first Cabinet of the DPRK, were veterans of the Independence Army.

While we were preparing for the battle after the meeting, our reconnaissance party informed headquarters that the enemy had rushed out of the walled town in order to forestall our attack. We lured the enemy out to a point favourable to us and then destroyed his main force, and by pursuing the fleeing enemy we launched our attack on the walled town. Our combined forces had to fight a hard battle in the pouring rain.

The greatest obstacle in the battle at Luozigou was a fort on a west hill just as in the battle in the Dongning county town. The battle went on for three days because of the enemy's desperate resistance from the fort. As we were holding a meeting at the headquarters of the Chinese units on the third day, a mortar shell from the fort caused wounds, some of them serious, to some of the commanders of the Chinese units, including Zhou Bao-zhong. Zhou was participating in the battle as the chief of staff of Kong Xian-yong's unit. Dispirited by the wounds suffered by their

commanders, some of the Chinese units began taking to flight in a disorderly manner, running directly away from Luozigou. If this retreat were not checked, the battle would end in failure. The capture of the fort on the hill would be decisive to the outcome of the battle. Not only mortars but several heavy and light machineguns were mounted on the fort. Shots from this fort fatally wounded the company commander, Han Hung Gwon, in the abdomen, so that his intestines came gushing out, and Jo Wal Nam was also put out of action. Han's wound was so appalling that he himself requested us to shoot him.

To the KPRA soldiers who were pinned down so that they could not approach the fort but only grind their teeth in vexation, I shouted, "Comrades, we must seize the fort at any cost. Let us fight for the revolution to the last drop of our blood!"

Then, mowing the enemy down with Mauser fire, I charged forward. The rain of machinegun bullets from the fort grazed my ears. A bullet pierced through my cap. But I dashed forward without pause for breath. The men sprang to their feet and followed me. The fort which was boasted to be impregnable fell into our hands in 30 minutes and a red flag was hoisted on top of it.

The soldiers of the Chinese units who saw that flag turned round and launched an all-out charge in high spirits. The self-sacrificing spirit of the Chinese communists, including Zhou Bao-zhong, was highly influential in arousing them from apathy and frustration to charge. Though wounded heavily, Zhou blocked the

soldiers' flight with open arms and shouted at them to look at the red flag flying on the fort on the west hill. The soldiers who saw him stopped their retreat and assaulted the enemy position, raising a loud battle cry.

The battle ended in victory for us.

Wen, the battalion commander of the puppet Manchukuo army, and the Japanese instructor, who were defending Luozigou, said in the last despairing message they sent to the commander of the Kwantung Army that they had been surrounded and under attack by 2,000 troops of the combined forces of Kim Il Sung's army and other units for six days and five nights and that they were on the brink of being annihilated. They wailed, "Our ammunition has run out and our fate will be decided in a moment. But we are proud of having done our best for the sake of Japan and the building of Manchukuo. Mr. Commander, please understand this and forgive us."

Our victory at Luozigou and Dadianzi was the greatest of all the victories the KPRA won in the early days of the anti-Japanese war. The KPRA's attack on Luozigou dealt a heavy blow at the enemy in his attempt to besiege us and struck mortal terror into his heart. After this battle the enemy's large and small "punitive" forces deployed in the vicinity of the guerrilla bases were paralyzed with fear.

Indeed, the battle at Luozigou reduced the enemy's power in the northeastern region of the Wangqing guerrilla zone, creating a situation favourable for expanding the guerrilla zones and making

a great contribution to the further consolidation of the allied front with the Chinese nationalist armed forces. After the battle we continued brisk political and military activities to thwart the enemy's attempts at siege. When the guerrilla zones were evacuated many of the revolutionary people in east Manchuria were able to settle down in the areas around Antu and Luozigou because we had turned this region into an invisible revolutionary base through intense military and political activities from the early days.

The KPRA sacrificed much blood during the summer offensive in 1934. The victory in the battle at Dadianzi was stained with the blood of Cha Ryong Dok, a popular commander of working class origin, who was one of the organizers of the Helong guerrilla unit and the political commissar of a regiment. He was the first political commissar to fall in action after the formation of the KPRA.

2. The Haves and the Have-nots

The guerrilla base was my home and secure nest, but I did not always stay there.

An army which is cooped up behind a fence will invite tactical self-destruction.

Consuming the people's provisions and gadding about the Xiaowangqing valley went against the grain. We were also disgusted by the doings of the Leftists and chauvinists who destroyed innocent people on their own side by labelling them as "Minsaengdan."

I used to go to fight behind the enemy lines in command of my unit whenever the situation permitted me to do so. After the semi-guerrilla zones were set up, I did this more frequently.

The people liked us to do this because they knew well that our actions behind the enemy lines would bring them rice and clothing. However the enemy might slander communism, the people did not believe him if we once stayed with them overnight. The personalities of the communists, expressed in their morality and manners had a stronger effect on the people than the enemy's

propaganda.

Men who had had interesting experiences in the enemy-held area vied with one another to accompany me.

I used to take the 5th company with me. Taking too many men could mean problems with food and attract too much attention to our activity, so I kept my company between 50 and 60 men. When more men were needed, I used to call on the 1st company. As I frequently operated behind the enemy lines, Choe Chun Guk, who was in command of the 2nd company, and Jang Ryong San who was in command of the 3rd company, earned the burden of defending Wangqing. The 4th company defended Yaoyinggou.

The 5th company was the crack unit in Wangqing. If they were ordered to march with an interval of three steps between men, they did so; when ordered to suppress the sound of their breathing, they did so. We used to hit a moderate target and then withdraw five or a dozen miles like lightning, avoiding major commitment.

Our harassing operations behind the enemy lines prevented the enemy from committing all his forces to the attack on the guerrilla base.

Some officials in charge of Party propaganda work after liberation gave no publicity to the experience of the Korean communists in fighting behind the enemy lines during the war against the Japanese. Instead, they propagandized only the traditions and experience of a foreign country. The flunkeyist fever spread by these people developed to such an extreme that immediately after liberation our people were not even aware that

there had been a heavy battle fought for the defence of Xiaowangqing during the anti-Japanese war, though they knew all about the battle of Stalingrad and tank battle at Kursk. At one time the Hero Ri Su Bok[12] was called the "Korean Matrosov." At the time of the Fatherland Liberation War our people believed that Matrosov of the Soviet Union was the first hero in the world ever to block an enemy pillbox with his own body. They were totally ignorant of the fact that Kim Jin, one of the anti-Japanese martyrs of their own country, had done this much earlier than Matrosov.

If we had educated people in our revolutionary traditions immediately after liberation, many of them would not have been killed during the temporary wartime retreat. They could have formed small units of five to six people or 15 to 20 people, each carrying an axe and one or two *mal* (a *mal* approximates to two pecks—Tr.) of rice, and moving from mountain to mountain, firing several shots now and then and posting up leaflets; in this way they could have endured one month or two in mountains. But such education was not given in advance, so during the war we incurred losses that could have been avoided.

Most of my activity behind the enemy lines was conducted in the rural villages in the area on the Tuman River. In one year I travelled by rail in the area along the Tuman River and I could recognize the mountains and ravines across the river, which looked exactly the same as in the old days.

As the saying has it, the darkest place is under the candlestick—it was a good choice to operate under the very nose of the enemy.

Our unit advanced to a mountain at the back of Tumen. We all operated in plain clothes there. We posted a sentry on the top of each of three hills, and carried on our operation without haste, reading and sleeping in the forest. The enemy had no idea there was a guerrilla unit operating under his very nose.

In the summers of 1933 and 1934 we operated around Tumen and Liangshuiquanzi on the Tuman River. While I was conducting mass political activities in the vicinity of Liangshuiquanzi following my return to Wangqing after the negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng, I had sent some of my men to the Tumen area and I myself had talked to the local inhabitants with a view to finding a suitable place for my headquarters. In general, they recommended three places, Mt. Songdong, Beigaoliling, and Caomaodingzi, as ideal; in fact, these places provided safety for the headquarters but were unsuitable for the purposes of our activity.

Something attracted me to the mountain at the back of Tumen. As I travelled to and from Onsong, I had thought it resembled Moran Hill in Pyongyang. I examined the place on the map and found it ideal for our purposes.

It had several ravines and dense forests, which made it an ideal place to spend the summer in improvised grass-thatched huts. Our organizations had been active in many places around this mountain since 1930, but there were still many villages where we had no organizations. Our intention was to turn these virgin villages into revolutionary ones.

I had intended to go to the mountain at the back of Tumen as

soon as the Luozigou battle was over. But I had to put off my departure and stay at Xiaowangqing for a while, since I had to obtain food and clothing for a Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army unit. It was already the beginning of hot period but the men of the Qingshan unit were still wearing worn-out cotton-padded clothes and barely managing to survive on potatoes the size of sparrows' eggs. In consequence, the potato fields around the place where the troops were stationed had been all ravaged. The owners of the fields resented the Qingshan unit. Relations between officers and men, who were ill-fed and ill-clothed, had naturally deteriorated, and the unit was turning into a gang of bandits. Some of them showed signs of wishing to surrender. The state of affairs in Kaoshan and Shi Zhong-heng's units was much the same. At that time Kaoshan unit had not yet been admitted to the KPRA.

We attacked Gayahe in cooperation with the Qingshan unit and divided the captured food and clothing among the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units and made another raid on the enemy in Diaomiaotai before we set off for the mountain behind Tumen. On my arrival at the mountain I found Han Hung Gwon, the company commander, had arrived before me. In the battle at Luozigou he had been wounded in the belly so heavily that his guts had fallen out of his abdomen, and he had been sent to guerrilla hospital. Now he had slipped away from hospital and had been secretly following our company.

The wound in his belly had almost healed up during the past month, but the marks of the suture were still reddish. Afraid that

his scar might split again, I ordered him go back to the hospital. This giant of a man pleaded with a tear-stained face not to be sent back. So I instructed the acting company commander, Comrade Wang, to take good care of him even on the mountain, so that the wound would not be aggravated.

The original name of Tumen was Huimudong. It was a village where the Koreans had built huts and baked lime. The place was surrounded by limestone mountains.

The Japanese imperialists who occupied Manchuria after the September 18 incident extended the Jilin-Hoeryong railway from Chaoyangchuan to Huimudong and named the terminal Tumen. They built houses around the station, set up a branch office of the Japanese consulate, built a police station and a customs house and stationed a garrison there. Thus they had turned the quiet village which had existed on limestone into a crowded town of consumers constantly pestered by army and police. The new street was named Tumen and the old village at the foot of the mountain to the west retained the old Korean name of Huimudong. A railway was soon built across the border between Tumen and Namyang. From then on, Tumen was an eastern gate protecting the Japanese concession in Manchuria. On the opposite side of the river lay Namyang, an important town on the route connecting Korea and Manchuria.

In the latter half of the 1930s, Japanese intelligence services involved in preparing for aggression against the Soviet Union made their base in this town. As we have seen above, Tumen was a place of considerable military and political significance.

In many respects it was an advantage for us that Tumen became a base for our activity and an important point on the route to the semi-guerrilla zones in the homeland.

We had formed an organization in Huimudong in the early days of our activity. This organization was under the influence of O Jung Song. When I crossed the river to Onsong in September 1930 I was helped by the comrades from Huimudong and when I went to Jongsong in May the next year I also received assistance from them. It was with the help of this organization that Choe Kum Suk had obtained apples and pears to tempt my appetite when I was ill.

Tumen, a transit point which connected us with Onsong, could in effect be called a supply base for the guerrillas.

The objective of our operations on the mountain at the back of Tumen was to frustrate the enemy's scheme of "severing the people from the bandits." In those days the enemy called the revolutionary army "communist bandits." The Japanese imperialists made it their policy to isolate the revolutionary army from the people and strove frantically to achieve this. They devised various schemes, namely, an ideological conversion operation, the policy of concentration villages, the ten-household joint responsibility system, the five-household joint surveillance system, and surrender operations.

Under the tyrannical policy of "severing the people from the bandits" many of our organizations were destroyed and the people began to panic. Some people went so far as to sign surrender applications. This tendency was most glaringly evident in the

southern part of Wangqing on the Tuman River.

We promulgated a slogan—Let us frustrate the enemy's isolation scheme by the unity of the people and the army!—and to implement it we set out to restore the organizations among the masses. We restored the organization in Nanyangcun where O Jung Hup was living, and we also formed new organizations with the Choes, based in Dalazi. After completing this work in the adjacent villages, we gradually moved towards Liangshuiquanzi, working among the masses, and infiltrating the lumberjacks and peasants. Once I led a small group to Xiongjidong, Mijiang, Hunchun County by way of Solgol, and re-established the organizations in Kyongwon (Saeppyol) and Hunyung across the Tuman River. As we did this, those people who had been distressed by the enemy's isolation scheme became active as their ties with the revolutionary army were strengthened.

During our operations from the mountain behind Tumen, I frequently visited the area of the six towns in the homeland in order to improve the guidance system of grassroots-level party organizations and other revolutionary organizations in various parts of the homeland and extend the work of building the party deep into Korea.

Since the formation of a party organization on Turu Hill in Onsong County in October 1930, a number of basic party organizations had also been created in the areas along the Tuman River through the efforts of hardcore members of the party leadership such as O Jung Hwa, Kim Il Hwan, Chae Su Hang, O

Pin and the political workers, Ri Pong Su, An Kil, and Jang Kum Jin. Many basic party organizations had been set up in Hoeryong, Yonsa, Unggi (Sonbong), Musan, Kyongwon (Saeppyol), Rajin, Puryong, Sinam-dong in Chongjin and other places.

In August 1933, a training course on underground party work was given in Paksokgol, Kyongwon (Saeppyol) County. The two-day training course, which was conducted under a tree near a charcoal kiln in Paksokgol, was attended by political workers and those leaders of underground revolutionary organizations who had been working in the northern region and other parts of Korea. The lectures on the building of underground party organizations were given by me, on questions of YCL work by Jo Tong Uk, on women's work by Pak Hyon Suk, and on Children's Corps work by Pak Kil Song.

It was about this time that a meeting of representatives of party and other revolutionary organizations in the homeland was held under our guidance in Onsong. The meeting took place in Jinmyong School in Phungin Workers' District (the present name of the place), Onsong County in February 1934. The main topic of discussion was expanding party organizations into wider areas of the country, and establishing the system of guidance for party organizations. The meeting also decided to establish regional organs of guidance such as district party committee.

As a result of this decision the Onsong district party committee headed by Jon Jang Won was formed. The meeting was important because it marked a turning-point in expanding the work of party

building in the homeland in the first half of the 1930s.

At that time *Joson Ilbo* (the Korea Daily—Tr.) reported that "The party meeting held in Jinmyong School decided on a few radical slogans and circulated them in print." The report gave a brief impression of the meeting.

The operations on the mountain behind Tumen gave rise to many amusing anecdotes.

I still remember one story about a stingy landowner who was made to pay dearly for his niggardliness. I do not remember the name of the village where the landowner lived, but it was certainly a Korean village.

One day I let the soldiers take a rest on the mountain at the back of Tumen and went down in plain clothes to the village where this landowner lived. At that time civilian wear was not a suit in the western style but Korean clothes. We always carried these clothes in our rucksack. Without wearing these clothes it was impossible to work in the enemy-controlled areas. Those who spoke fluent Japanese carried Japanese clothes.

That day I was accompanied by my orderly Ri Song Rim and two other men.

It was late afternoon, and we had a few hours till sunset. I wanted to sound out the feelings of the people in the village, which we had not visited yet. I was also feeling bored after living in the mountain for days at a time. I intended to ask for help and form an organization in the village if the villagers were well-disposed. There were no Japanese soldiers or policemen there.

We made for the largest, most imposing house with a tiled roof and I asked if the master was in. There was no answer and the door was locked from the inside in the middle of the day. We took the handle of the gate and rattled it. Only then did we hear someone coming out, dragging his shoes lazily. A middle-aged man opened the gate and cast a frowning glance at us. This was the landowner who would be taught a lesson.

"Sir, we are travellers. It's getting late and we're looking for lodgings. Will you be kind enough to let us stay overnight at your house?" I asked him politely.

The master spat abusive language at us, calling us crazy. He was unpleasant and ill-tempered.

"Why have you chosen to come to this house in the village? There is an inn a little over a mile from here. Do you think this is the village mill?" His manner of rolling his eyes and shouting abuse betrayed an ugly temper. Without any preliminaries he denounced us as crazy and treated us with contempt, as if we were beggars. I felt indignant. But I was tolerant and said politely once again, "Sir, I have pain in my legs and blisters on my feet. So I can walk no farther. Let us stay overnight here, please."

He yelled back at us, foaming with rage, "I say the inn is not far from here. Why do you cling to me like a leech? I haven't even met you bastards at a fair."

My orderly, standing behind me, begged for the man to have mercy on me. "Master, we have no money to pay for the inn. It is said that God blesses the kind-hearted. You could pretend that you

are treating us to a feast, you may....”

“Do you want me to give you money?” he cut the orderly off in mid-speech and spat, “What nonsense!” He shut the gate and disappeared inside.

This was the first time I received such treatment in ten years of revolutionary activity. There were many rich people in central Manchuria, where I had been engaged in underground activity. None of them was as cold-hearted as this landowner.

My orderly was quivering with rage. He had never imagined that his commander would be treated so badly by such a worthless country landowner. He suggested shooting the brute. He said he would at least like to fire a blank in his ear to scare him into fainting.

I, too, was on fire with rage. It is only natural that fellow countrymen should become more friendly when they meet in a foreign land. Even people whose lives set them against each other in their own land share a feeling of fellowship in a foreign land. This is the nature of human beings. The landowner who insulted us by calling crazy had not an iota of compassion.

Could human nature become spoilt in this way because the country had been ruined? There is a saying that misery loves company.

No nation is so compassionate as the Koreans. That is why we have the saying: an evil spirit cannot resist ritual prayers, a human being cannot resist compassion.

Koreans are especially hospitable to visitors, and this is a virtue.

It is the kind-hearted custom of our people to accord cordial hospitality to their visitors. Although the head of our family was only a grave keeper, our family had always been kind to its visitors. If we had a visitor when our provisions had almost run out and we had to live on gruel, my mother used to add a bowl of water to the gruel pot so that the visitor might share the meal with us. In those cases, my mother and my aunt used to eat the thinnest portion of the gruel.

Even though the women of my family might skip one or two meals, they never complained about the family's poverty or misfortune. This was the true image of the Korean nation, which was engraved in my heart in my boyhood.

Since ancient times people in this country had been so hospitable that even a penniless man could have travelled throughout the country if he had chosen to. That is why foreigners who have been guests in an ordinary Korean home have spoken highly of our country as an eastern country of great courtesy.

Was it not Korean blood, then, running in the veins of that wicked landlord? How could he be so cold-hearted towards a fellow man?

He was immoral.

A nation whose power has decayed can be dispossessed of its country. A people without a country can be deprived even of their written and spoken languages and their surnames. But how can they discard their kind hearts? If all of the people were to become brutes like this landowner, the Korean people could never win

back Korea.

It is fortunate, however, that only a tiny handful of Koreans were like the landlord.

I was obliged to revise my views of the rich.

In the summer of 1933, a unit of the Chinese national salvation army stationed in Shiliping made a raid upon Shixian and, as one of the operations for collecting economic contributions, held a wife of a Chinese rich man for ransom. She had had her feet tightly bound to keep her feet from growing according to Chinese custom, and she had been detained for a few days in her simple underwear in Shiliping. The unit sent a notice to her husband informing him that if a certain amount of money was brought before a certain date, his wife would be sent back home. The rich man, however, did not show up in Shiliping, saying that with that amount of money he could get married to a prettier woman. It was her own father, instead of her husband, who ransomed her. This showed what the ill-tempered rich people were like.

We went around the village again to find a lodging. We decided to ask for help at a thatched house instead of a tile-roofed house. We saw a thatched house not far from the landowner's house: the members of the household were having supper with the doors of the rooms wide open.

I spoke to the master of the house just as I had done to the landowner. "Good evening, we are travellers. It is late and we are seeking a lodging. Can we stay overnight at your house?"

He rose and looked out at us, resting his hand on the upright of the door. “Come in and sit down. Join us in this humble gruel. We apologize, but it is our only meal. Please, come in, though the room is not in good order.”

“Don’t mention it. We are in no position to complain.”

He led us into the room. Even though the room was shabby, his words and deeds showed how kind-hearted he was.

The husband asked his wife if there was another bowl of gruel. She said yes. At this the thought came to me that people who live in poverty were quite different. The common people possess good hearts but the rich people do not. Their sincere invitation to join them at supper moved both of us.

“What will you do if we eat your supper? All we need is a lodging.” We declined the offer with thanks, thinking it too much to eat their supper.

The man chided me for my refusal.

“There’s no such rule of etiquette in the world. Guests are supposed to accept their host’s kindness. I’m afraid you are declining it because it is not very tasty. But this is all we can offer. Wife, bring a few more roots of leek and a plate of bean paste.”

The mistress did as told by her husband.

We were moved almost to tears by the warmth of their hearts; they were treating us as if we were their own kinsfolk. I sat at the table but the thought of the comrades standing guard on the outskirts of the village prevented me from taking up my spoon.

“Thank you, master! I’ll eat it later. Help yourself first. Our

comrades are outside the village."

"How many of you are still to come?" He looked worried as he asked this. Naturally he was worried about more visitors coming, because there was only one extra bowl of gruel.

"There are two more comrades and they have blisters on their feet, they cannot walk. Master, they say there is an inn around here, is it true?"

"Yes, certainly. It is about two miles away. How can they walk all that distance with blistered feet? You should stay here tonight and go there tomorrow morning, though you'll have to share gruel with us. Please bring the others here, too."

I asked him what sort of a man the landowner was.

He replied that, in a word, he was miserly and ill-tempered and added: "He has turned his back against the villagers but he is fairly friendly with policemen and officials. A few days ago, a young man who came from Korea to visit his relatives here, was arrested for no particular reason and tortured almost to death at the police station before being released and going back home. I suspect this was the landowner's work."

Meanwhile, it had become dark.

I ordered the orderly to send the men on guard duty to bring the men from the mountain, because we were going to stay the night in that village.

Some time later, the company commander, Han Hung Gwon, led the unit to the village.

At the sight of 60 to 70 soldiers entering the village, the

landowner realized something was happening and presented himself to our comrades, flattering them and saying, “How can I help you, sirs?” Then he fussed over the guerrillas and invited them to his house. How can a man live that way, spending his energy on double dealing?

Han Hung Gwon, not knowing his true motive, was very moved and said to me, “Comrade Commander, that landowner is kind-hearted, just like the landowner Jang in Xiaowangqing and the one in Tumen.” The landowner Jang had given sincere assistance to the guerrillas, but had been banished from the guerrilla zone to Daduchuan by orders of the Soviet government. The Tumen landowner was a conscientious man who had responded to our request for cloth and cotton wool and other materials sufficient to make 500 uniforms for the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army, which was a difficult problem for us at the time. We made clothes with that materials for all the soldiers of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army in Xiaowangqing.

The Tumen landowner used to come to Shiliping to visit his relatives. Once our comrades somehow found out when he was coming and detained him in order to collect funds. When we returned from our operations behind the enemy lines, the comrades in the headquarters had released him, saying that the method was wrong. I sent for the landowner, who was fleeing from the guerrilla zone and frankly explained to him the situation with clothing for the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army and appealed to him for help. He promised to help us and went back

home, and later he kept his word.

I briefed Han Hung Gwon on what had happened in the village.

"Comrade Han, don't be deceived by flattery. He is an ill-natured man who refuses to open his gate to a visitor."

When he heard this he gave a hollow laugh of blank dismay. Then, with his fist clenched in rage, he said:

"I see he is a wicked fellow. Such a man should not be forgiven. Let's try him and shoot him."

I waved my hand to calm him down and stop him trembling with rage.

"No, don't do that. What is the use of executing a landowner? That will only upset the public pointlessly. It would be better to tell him not to lose his conscience as a Korean."

"Then we must teach him a good lesson. That son of a bitch should not be allowed to get away with it."

"But you must not behave like bandits," I warned him lest he should go too far.

When Han Hung Gwon came to his house, the shrewd landowner pressed himself close under his jaw and asked him who was the commander. His intention was to let the commander and a few other officers stay in his house, and do nothing for the other men, because they would have to be billeted on several villagers anyway. This cold-hearted man was quick in his calculations.

Han Hung Gwon introduced himself as the commander and suggested slyly.

"This household seems to be fairly well off. I think we can stay

here for a month or two eating your rice. Even if we do, you will not run short of food, will you?"

"Well, I cannot guarantee two months, but I can afford to take care of you for a few days."

The landowner's face turned pale for fear that the guerrillas might really stay in his house for two months.

With an air of indifference to the landlord's anxiety, Han Hung Gwon went on to say something that would really stun him.

"Master, how many pigs do you have in your house? Our men have not tasted meat for several months. I think you have a pile of a hundred sacks of rice in reserve, haven't you, though I am not sure about other houses?"

"Oh, my God, a hundred sacks you say? I've never had that much. Even though the other houses pretend to be poor and eat gruel, they all have enough rice."

"Whether the others have rice or not, you should treat us. You are rich, so you don't need to worry about it. If you have any conscience as a Korean, you must contribute your share to achieving the country's independence. You mean that we should eat the rice of the poor people who are short of food? How can the peasants farm if we eat up their seed grain?"

Intimidated by Han Hung Gwon, the landowner butchered pigs and offered the men rice. The men who had been billeted on peasants also ate rice brought from the landowner's. If he had treated us properly, he would have not suffered this misfortune.

After teaching him a good lesson, Han Hung Gwon returned to

me, bringing a rush mat and a quilt from the landowner's to make up my bed. He was a man who enjoyed playing such jokes on people.

That night at the good-natured peasant's house we had rice which Han Hung Gwon brought from the landowner's.

"Will there not be trouble if we do this?" the peasant asked me apprehensively.

"Master, don't worry," I assured him, "there is nothing for you to worry about. You have only lent us your cooking pot. If the landowner finds fault with you later, tell him that you had nothing to do with what the guerrillas did."

"If you are guerrillas, I can set my mind at ease. It was foolish of me not to recognize you as guerrillas."

The man and his wife had not known who we really were. Out of their simple kindness as Koreans they invited us to share whatever they were eating, whether it was gruel or bean paste. But the landowner was devoid of such courtesy. If a Japanese policeman had come to see him, however, he would have flattered him, offering him a cushioned seat.

This was how the rich differed from the poor. But not all the rich people were cold-hearted or totally lacking in love for their country. Jiang Wan-cheng, Jiang Wei-hua's father, was a wealthy landowner, but he was an ardent patriot of high reputation. I must also speak highly of the wealthy widow Paek[13] because she was a renowned patriot who spared no money for the enlightenment and development of our nation. That is why she was later named Paek

Son Haeng (virtuous deeds—Tr.).

Most of the rich people, however, were miserly and cold-hearted, like the landowner we met. There is some truth in the saying that charity comes from the granary, but it does not always apply. Was the peasant who treated us to barley gruel hospitable because he had a large stock of rice? In fact he had nothing but one sack of early-harvested barley in the corner of his room.

No matter how much money a man may have, he will be forsaken by the world if he has no compassion. Even though one lives in a hut, one can be morally rich, have many friendly neighbours and be held in high esteem by everyone, if one is kind to one's fellows. If a man's worth is judged by moral excellence, the landowner who turned us away must be called a miserably poor man not worthy of human respect.

In this case true virtue was found in a hut in which ordinary people lived, not in a grandiose house.

Ri Pong Su and his wife once contracted an eruptive typhus when they were working in Machang. At that time Ri Pong Su was the head of a hospital, and his wife An Sun Hwa was working in the hospital. She crawled out to bury their child, who had died of starvation, and covered the body with oak leaves. Ri Pong Su had a feeling that soon he might also die just as his child had. He took off the new clothes which his comrades had brought him a few days before, folded them neatly, and set his last will and testament on them.

"These clothes have not been worn for long and I ask the

comrade who finds this testament to wear them in my place."

This incident shows how superior the compassion of the revolutionaries was to that of the landowner.

Ri Pong Su miraculously survived and continued to work for the revolution, but his testament remained as proof of his humanity and still moves the people's hearts, an example of the noble and warm world of humanity which only communists can create.

When we returned to the guerrilla zone from the mountain behind Tumen, we gathered the soldiers together and told them about our experience in the village.

"Look! This is a clear example of people's class character. The poor peasant invited us to share his gruel, whereas the rich landowner drove us away from his gate, let alone inviting us to share his meal. He is a wicked man, isn't he? We must overthrow the exploitative society in order to do away with such wicked men."

The incident was good material for class education. This story about the rich landowner and the poor peasant became a common topic of conversation in the villages on the Tuman River. People who were told the story condemned the landowner as a wicked man and praised the peasant as a kind-hearted man. When our plain clothes squads approached the vicinity of a village, the young people from the village came out to them and informed them which households were rich and which families had cattle belonging to the "People's Association."

In those days the cattle of the "People's Association" were

raised in rural villages. After Japan occupied Manchuria, the "People's Association," a reactionary organization, had distributed its cattle among peasants to be raised. The animals were raised by peasants but did not belong to them; when they were fully grown, they had to be returned to the association. It was a mechanism for exploiting the peasants' labour. These animals had seals on their horns.

When they said that certain families had these oxen, the young people of the village meant that the guerrillas could slaughter them for meat without damaging the people's interests. The guerrillas picked out these oxen and butchered them. The Japanese became frantic at this, saying that the villagers were all bad people: How could the communist army know which houses had been raising the cattle of the "People's Association"? The people of the village must have informed them.

The peasants would answer them, "How could we know? We know nothing about it. They have a list. We could do nothing to stop them, they picked them out from the list."

Long experience had bred in my bones the feeling that the richer people were, the more cold-hearted they were, the more devoid of virtue. Wealth which is opposed to goodness and morality itself is not a source of virtue but a trap which swallows and destroys virtue. The landowner in the village on the Tuman River hurt me deeply. Because of him, my impression of the village was not good.

The incident hardened my resolve, when the country became

independent, to wipe out the old society of immorality and corruption, in which the landowners and capitalists lorded it over others, and to build a beautiful and sound society where all the people would live in harmony like one family, with no gulf between the poor and the rich.

We are striving to make all our working people rich, not to have rich people who live in luxury, growing fat on others' sweat and blood, but materially and morally rich people who are honest, industrious, and create social wealth by their own labour. We cannot tolerate a capitalist society in which money is all-powerful. When an era in which everyone enjoys equitable material and moral wealth is ushered in, humanity will be free from all social evils for ever.

3. Crossing the Laoyeling Mountains

We returned to the guerrilla base when our activities in the enemy-controlled area were over, but we had to leave Wangqing with the knapsacks still on our backs. Zhou Bao-zhong in north Manchuria sent a messenger to us, requesting our assistance.

I took his request very seriously. He was a Chinese friend and comrade-in-arms who had fought for the common cause in close liaison with me since we had worked together on the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee. The Luozigou battle had deepened my friendship with Zhou. He was ten years older than I. I regarded it as a noble internationalist duty to meet his request and made hasty preparation for an expedition to north Manchuria.

One day in late October 1934, when snow was falling in large flakes, the 170-strong expeditionary force of three companies selected from the soldiers in Wangqing, Hunchun and Yanji, left Duitoulazi and set out to cross the Laoyeling Mountains.

Nature is a mysterious force. Mountain ranges bound countries, and divide provinces and counties. Sometimes a mountainous barrier marks off differences in the levels of development of

politics, economy and culture.

Laoyeling is a steep mountain range that demarcates east Manchuria from the north and south of Manchuria, north Jiandao from east Jiandao, and east Jiandao from west Jiandao. The features of the terrain on its northern and southern slopes present a sharp contrast. The southern side is a series of steep hills, whereas the northern side is a boundless expanse of vast plains such as can only be found in the Honam area, the southwest of Korea. Most of the people living in east Manchuria south of Laoyeling were from North Hamgyong Province, whereas many of those living north of Laoyeling were from North and South Kyongsang Provinces.

From the point of view of the level of ideological consciousness, the people in north Manchuria rather lagged behind those in east Manchuria. Consequently, the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people was also not as high as it was in east Manchuria. One day Zhou Bao-zhong confessed that the work of enlightening the north Manchurian people politically was more difficult than that of awakening the east Manchurian people. This was a serious problem faced by the north Manchurian communists in their activities. If we lightened their burden even a little, it would be conducive to the harmonious development of the revolution in northeast China.

We had planned large-scale operations in the south and north of Manchuria, as well as in east Manchuria and the homeland. Giving our best efforts to cooperation with neighbouring units was the policy which we had maintained from the very start of our

struggle. This was why we considered a meeting with Ri Hong Gwang and Ri Tong Gwang to be one of the main objectives of our march into south Manchuria and strove hard to achieve it. Helping north Manchuria also meant helping Kim Chaek, Choi Yong Kun, Ho Hyong Sik, Ri Hak Man, Ri Kye Dong and other Korean communists who were waging a guerrilla struggle in this area.

The expeditionary force seethed with excitement from the very start. The prospect of a new place always arouses a rainbow-coloured fancies. What is more, the men were mostly aged 18 to 20, and therefore most curious and eager for adventure. As I led the unit, I felt the same pride and joy as they did.

But from the moment the expeditionary force left Duitoulazi, I was haunted by an uneasy feeling, which seemed to hobble my steps. The farther away from the guerrilla zone we went, the more uneasy I became.

I was on my way to north Manchuria, when the guerrilla bases in east Manchuria were not yet completely free from enemy encirclement. The long-term special peace-maintenance scheme was a massive programme of "punitive" operations which the Japanese imperialists had worked out in order to encircle and overcome us by means of a protracted war, after they had suffered defeat by the summer offensive of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The main point of this programme was to divide the year and a half from September 1934 to March 1936 into three periods and launch their offensives in places where the

public peace was comparatively secure, and continue until they could crush the last stronghold of the people's revolutionary army. Their scheme of encroaching siege by means of expanding their occupied area step by step over a long period of time could effectively strangle and suffocate the revolution.

Of course, our expedition to north Manchuria would make a great breach in the Japanese army's scheme for the siege.

An equally serious danger threatening the guerrilla zones was the ultra-Leftist anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle which was under way throughout Jiandao. In complete contradiction of the original goal set by the east Manchurian party committee, this struggle was exploited to meet the ulterior purpose of certain ambitious elements, position seekers, chauvinists and factionalist flunkeyists in the leadership. Their manoeuvres were disintegrating the revolutionary ranks from within and threatened the very existence of the guerrilla bases.

The merciless iron club of a purge campaign punished faithful and true revolutionaries and patriotic masses en masse every day, without discriminating friend from foe. The majority of soldiers and civilians in the guerrilla bases were suspected of involvement in the "Minsaengdan" case.

Worse still, the spearhead of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle was directed against Koreans, particularly against cadres and core elements who were working in important positions in the party, the army and mass organizations. The gun barrel of the purge was always aimed at the leading officials, fighters and most active

workers whom the masses had trusted and followed. For example, Ri Yong Guk, the secretary of the Wangqing county party committee, was executed on a charge of being a "Minsaengdan" member. Commander of the Wangqing battalion Ryang Song Ryong, who was imprisoned and accused of being a "Minsaengdan" member, and only released when I stood surety for him, was still under surveillance. In this way, ambitious men and schemers in Jiandao used the excuse of a purge campaign to plot against true revolutionaries. Kim Myong Gyun, the head of the military department of the county party committee, and Ri Ung Gol, the secretary of the first district party committee, who were to be executed, on charges of being "Minsaengdan" members, escaped from the guerrilla zone.

When late October came, heavy snow fell and a strong wind blew in Manchuria. From olden times the people in the north had called this wind the Siberia wind.

On the day we left Duitoulazi, too, piercingly cold wind raged as if to check our march over Laoyeling. The Laoyeling Mountains looked like an arrow fixed to a bow. The name of the mountain range can be translated as old man mountain range, and it indicated a mountain range that was very high and steep. We spent all day scaling it. Ri Song Rim complained frequently about the steepness of the mountain.

As we were crossing the mountains Ko Pobae encouraged our comrades greatly by displaying his talent. I have already mentioned briefly that when Tong Chang-rong was in Longjing

prison, Ko picked a pocket in order to get himself arrested by the police, and took a chance on meeting Tong in prison to inform him of our opinion. He was extraordinarily quick with his hands, so that he could, for instance, quite easily "steal" all the money in a big market. He could have lived in luxury simply by exploiting his skill, becoming richer than a millionaire, if he had set his mind to it.

It was a mysterious yet truly laudable act for such a man to come into the mountain and plunge into the crucible of the revolution.

However, skill with his hands was only one of his talents. His most wonderful achievements were his vocal dexterity and comedy. Placing his hands on his lips, he could produce all kinds of sound and he could twitch his face and set his eyes and lips askew. When he played such farcical tricks, even Wang De-tai, the 2nd Army Corps commander, who was very blunt and unsociable, would burst into roars of laughter with his mouth gaping open. When he jumped about on one leg, with the other folded up, nobody could help laughing.

When he strolled about markets and streets with a sack on his back, singing a beggar's tune, he looked like the most stupid of men, so he was easily able to deceive the enemy.

He frequently employed this dexterity and the art of disguise when he went to towns and villages to sound out the enemy. For this activity he was known by the nickname Pobae (a treasure—Tr.), apparently because he was as valuable as a treasure. Few of

his comrades-in-arms called him by his real name. Even I called him by his nickname. His real name was not even widely known. Some people said he was born in North Hamgyong Province and others said he came from South Hamgyong Province or Kangwon Province. Ko Pobae himself did not know where he came from.

When asked where he was born he would reply that he was born in a coastal village of Korea. He did not know his native land because he had come to Manchuria when he was a baby and his parents died early. He was equal to any task because he had known bitter toil since his childhood. He could do the work of a blacksmith, a builder or a barber, if necessary.

For some time Ko Pobae acted as a messenger between the north and east of Manchuria. He did not talk carelessly about what he did and where. When his comrades asked him "What are you doing nowadays, Comrade Pobae? Are you a guerrilla?" he said yes. When they asked him "Are you an inspector?" he also said yes. He always answered such questions with such a queer smile that his comrades could not tell whether he was joking or being serious. This was Ko's peculiar way of keeping his duties secret.

Just as Ko Pobae followed and respected me unconditionally, so I trusted and loved him absolutely. When we were scaling Laoyeling, two Japanese biplanes came flying low over the peak and then returned. Apparently the "punitive" troops who had been chasing us had informed their headquarters of the whereabouts of our expeditionary force.

On that day unusually heavy snow fell from morning to

evening. All the mountain ridges and valleys north of Laoyeling were covered with such deep snow that we could not distinguish one valley from another. To make matters worse, a strong wind blew up in the afternoon, so that even Ko Pobae, who knew the terrain as well as the front yard of his own house, was quite at a loss as to which way to go, to say nothing of others who were strangers to north Manchuria. We lost our way at a point 20 miles from Badaohezi and halted our march. In the mercilessly pouring snow and severe cold my men's eyes were fixed on my face. Ko Pobae, who had been so cheerful stood before me with stooped shoulders, as if he had committed a crime.

"Every year some travellers lose their way and die, buried in snowdrifts on this mountain pass. Last year, seven or eight soldiers of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army died on this strange mountain. Perhaps we should turn back to a village and spend one night there until the snowstorm dies down, before resuming our march."

He suggested this timidly, looking in irritation at the northern valleys of Laoyeling, covered with white snow.

I did not accept his suggestion, because retreat in such a case would have been utterly destructive.

"No, we cannot do that. You have nothing to be afraid of in a place where you have worn out many shoes. This is Laoyeling, not Haerbaling or Mudanling, so we have no other choice but to find our way here. All we have to do is to go straight towards the north, using my compass. You have nothing to fear. Brace up. Our

comrades in north Manchuria are waiting for us."

My words heartened Ko Pobae. He forced his way through the snow at the head of the column, making the sound of a motor engine with his mouth. At the sound of the engine all the men in the expeditionary force burst into laughter that reverberated across Laoyeling.

We marched until the next day and found a small Chinese village. Hardly had we entered this village, when the "punitive" troops of the Japanese army which had been billeted on a neighbouring village attacked us by surprise. So we fought our first battle in north Manchuria.

The "punitive" troops of the Japanese army or the puppet Manchukuo army in north Manchuria had never fought a battle with the people's revolutionary army. Their opponents were only such rabble as local bandits or mountain rebels who would tremble and turn tail at the sight of the Japanese army.

The Japanese "punitive" troops, who had been accustomed to destroying their foes by simple pursuit, attacked us that day in conceit, taking us for local bandits or mountain rebels. We quickly occupied a hill and returned fire, dispatching a platoon to attack the enemy from behind. The enemy was struck hard, and quite at a loss what to do. In this battle the enemy suffered heavy casualties.

The news of this battle was spread far across north Manchuria by the enemy. They created a great commotion, saying that *laogaoli* units had come from east Manchuria. "They are brilliant fighters. Who on earth commands the unit? It may be Kim Il Sung's unit which

attacked the Dongning county town." From that time on the newspapers reported on our unit. In those days the enemy called our guerrilla army "communist bandits" or the communist party, or ambiguously, the anti-Manchukuo army.

The expeditionary force won the battle, but all the villagers had taken refuge, so we found ourselves left totally without support, with no way at all of obtaining food. If we were to stay in the village until we found Zhou Bao-zhong, we had to know the enemy's movements. But we had neither an intelligence network of our own nor any acquaintances. In such a situation it was impossible for us to take the next step. Even Ko Pobae had no knowledge of the whereabouts of the Ningan guerrilla army. We left the village and spent one night in an unknown valley. The next day Ko Pobae and O Tae Song went scouting and found Zhou Bao-zhong's camp. In that mountain camp I met Zhou, who was under medical care, with 20 to 30 men under his command. A wound he had received from a mortar shell in the Luozigou battle had festered badly and had not healed even though months had passed.

Zhou walked out, supporting himself on a stick, and assisted by his men. He came quite a distance from the hut to meet us.

"As you see, I am still in bad condition," he said, smiling sadly, raising his stick, and then squeezed my hand tightly. "I am very happy to meet you again like this. I hope you will give me a lot of help."

His greetings were short, but his voice and look showed how

much he expected from me.

My reunion with Zhou was an event which symbolized a new chapter in the history of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. This meeting marked the start of the full-scale joint struggle of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the guerrilla units led by Chinese communists.

Just as we attached great importance to our cooperation with the armed forces led by the Chinese communists, so the Chinese communists in Manchuria were making every effort to implement joint operations with the armed forces led by Korean communists. When various Anti-Japanese Volunteers' Army units such as the anti-Japanese nationalist army, the national salvation army units, the Red Spear Society and the Broad Sword Society were formed in many places of Manchuria in opposition to Jiang Jie-shi's policy of non-resistance after the September 18 incident, and they challenged the Japanese aggressors, both the Korean and Chinese communists attached great importance to a united front with them and made great efforts to bring it about. There is no need to repeat here the great success we had achieved through tireless efforts.

After 1934 the activity of the Anti-Japanese Volunteers' Army gradually declined. When the Japanese had stepped up their offensive, many commanders of the Anti-Japanese Volunteers' Army had left for China proper, taking their units, and others had surrendered or had become bandits. Some of the nationalists like Shi Zhong-heng had converted to communism. The enemy called such units of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army "political

bandits."

In this situation the anti-Japanese armed struggle in Manchuria developed through the building-up of an army with a well-organized administration, through an alliance between the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army led by Korean communists and various anti-Japanese nationalist army units under the influence of the Chinese communists.

Zhou said that the organization of the Ningan anti-Japanese guerrilla army had not gone smoothly, and explained in detail. The backbone of the Ningan guerrilla army consisted of the 20 anti-Japanese soldiers who had followed him when he left Luozigou.

When the eastern area bureau of Jilin Province was dissolved and the Suining central county party committee was organized, Zhou had taken charge of its military department and started raising an army, with his 20 men as its backbone. The ranks had soon increased to 50 men when a unit of Korean guerrillas joined his unit. After many negotiations his unit had merged with Ping Nan-yang's unit, which had its home base in the Erdaohezi area.

Zhou Bao-zhong had recommended Ping as the commander of the merged unit and he had taken charge of military affairs.

Ping's real name was Li Jing-pu. He was called Ping Nan-yang for a profound reason. Ping Nan-yang meant "pacifying the south." In those days the Japanese aggressors were concentrated in the area south of Ningan County. Li Jing-pu intended to fight a decisive battle with the Japanese aggressors entrenched in this area. Thus his unit was named the Ping Nan-yang unit and its commander Li Jing-pu was

called Ping Nan-yang.

As this anecdote shows, he was both courageous and patriotic. But strong in his anti-Japanese sentiment and courageous as he was, he suffered difficulties because of his undisciplined men. This also bothered Zhou who, as the leader of the unit, held the real power over it.

When he met me, Zhou requested me to work with Ping Nan-yang in his stead.

"Ping Nan-yang is full of heroic aspirations, but he has a friendly feeling towards you Commander Kim because he was saved by a Korean communist."

I said that, grateful as I was to him for his confidence, I felt my shoulders burdened with a heavy responsibility. Zhou said with a smile, "I believe only in your extraordinary influence, which persuaded Commander Yu and Commander Wu."

He was also worried about relations with the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units.

In Ningan County and its vicinity there were numerous small and large AJNA units, many of which were hostile to the communists. This was a great obstacle which the Ningan anti-Japanese guerrilla army had to remove immediately if its operations were to be successful. Daping, Sijihao, Zhanzhonghua and Renyixia units, which made frequent appearances around the centre of Beihutou west of Dongjingcheng, were AJNA units which had once joined with Ping and later broken with him. These units were hostile to the communists and, worse still, the Jingan

army urged them to surrender, driving an even greater wedge between these units and the communists. It was difficult to predict what they might become in the future. Shuangshan and Zhongyang AJNA units, which were engaged only in banditry in the northwest of Tongjingcheng, were under threat from the Jingan army. Jiang Ai-min's unit, the strongest of all the AJNA units, small and large, in the Dangdaogou area, east of Ningan, was vacillating following bitter experiences during a "punitive" operation by the 13th brigade of the Japanese army.

The units under Jiang Ai-min's command had once escaped to east Manchuria, pursued by the 13th brigade. These units had been plundering food and had eventually applied for surrender. Our comrades had managed to dissuade them from surrendering.

Zhou Bao-zhong said that Chai Shi-rong's unit in Machang had become less active than before.

He complained of the results of the Zhanzhonghua incident in Ningan, which was similar to the Guan's unit incident[14] in Wangqing, saying that this mishap had prevented his unit from working overtly. The Zhanzhonghua incident was a deplorable event which had taken place before Zhou joined with Ping. When Ping's unit was suffering internal discord, the rebels offered wine to Ping and his followers, then disarmed them and fled. Ping had not even a Mauser. In an effort to re-equip the unit which now had practically nothing, Ping, together with his faithful subordinates, disarmed Zhanzhonghua unit in the Nanhutou area, which had been seeking a way to surrender. After this incident the AJNA

units in north Manchuria branded the Ningan guerrilla army which was associated with the name of Ping Nan-yang as an enemy.

In the final analysis, Zhou's request was that I should play the role of an arbitrator in improving his relations with the AJNA units so that his unit would be able to operate overtly.

Zhou was most seriously worried about the state of the revolutionary movement in the Ningan area. He was exasperated by the failure to develop the revolution in this area, as if his own inability and negligence were responsible for it.

"From the point of view of the east Manchurian people, Ningan is a place where no revolutionary wind is blowing. I don't understand why the masses are in such low spirits. No matter how earnestly we appeal to the people to rise up for the revolution, they remain aloof from us. Do you know the attitude of the peasants here? They say they can make a living even though the landlords bleed them white. They say, if they go into the mountain they can obtain a lot of land, and why should they shed blood for the revolution when they can till the land and earn a living? From the point of view of the common people, the vast areas of land may make them happy, but at the moment it dulls their class consciousness. I don't know whether we should be proud of the vast lands of north Manchuria or regret that they exist."

Listening to him I burst out laughing.

"Ha, ha, it is fortunate for the 400 million Chinese people that the vast land exists."

Zhou Bao-zhong, too, laughed merrily, which smoothed the

wrinkles from his face.

"Yes, it is. The vast territory and fertile land are a source of well-being for the whole nation. I was pointlessly worried. Comrade Kim, I have told you about my problem. Help me, please. I can only sleep at peace, if I can find a way to develop the revolution in Ningan, but I don't know how to do it."

I could fully sympathize with his problem. He was an able and well-informed man, but his health was too bad for the arduous north Manchurian revolution. His festering wound prevented him from displaying his ability fully. What is worse, he had few hardcore elements at his disposal.

In the hut in Badaohezi we spent a few days discussing ways of developing the revolution in north Manchuria. We concluded that going among the people was the solution to many difficult problems arising in the north Manchurian revolution. Awakening the people and mobilizing them was the only way to save the north Manchurian revolution from stagnation. To this end, we had to conduct political work among the people and step up the military operations of the guerrilla army. The armed ranks would be expanded in the course of fighting, and the revolution would develop through struggle. If we remained idle and did not fight, we could do nothing.

Without intensifying our military operations it would be impossible to improve our relations with the AJNA units and win them over as allies or to restore Ping Nan-yang's image, which had been disgraced by the Zhanzhonghua incident.

We confirmed that we shared the same opinions on such matters.

When we met with Zhou in his hut, Wu Ping, the Comintern's special representative to Manchuria, was also there, and he showed us the six-point anti-Japanese national salvation programme which he had brought from Shanghai. The original name of this document was the "Basic Programme of the Chinese People on Anti-Japanese Operations." This document was published in the name of the National Armed Self-defence Preparatory Committee of China. It was signed by the renowned figures Song Qing-ling, Zhang Nai-qi, He Xiang-ning and Ma Xiang-bai. Wu Ping said that the signatories to the document had automatically become members of this committee and that thousands of people had already signed it.

The six-point programme of national salvation reflected the policy of the anti-imperialist united front which the Chinese Communist Party proposed when the Japanese imperialists were trying to occupy the north of China proper by posing as the protector of China, and Jiang Jie-shi was starting the fifth "punitive" operation against the communist army. In the Chinese revolution, too, the communists did their best to unite and mobilize all the national forces. I therefore considered the six-point programme as a document in season.

For 10 days we discussed these matters comprehensively with Wu Ping. As I spoke with him I learned that the Chinese communists had broken the siege of Jiang Jie-shi and started the

long march of 25 thousand *ri* under the banner of the northward advance against Japan, in accordance with the strategy of Mao Ze-dong. We were encouraged greatly by the fact that the Chinese revolution had gone over from retreat, following the failure of the first civil war, to a partial offensive, consolidating on its success.

The anti-Japanese national salvation movement launched in China proper, as well as the powerful thrust of the northward advance against Japan started by the Chinese communists, would create favourable conditions for the revolutionary struggle of the Korean and Chinese communists in the east and in other parts of Manchuria.

Zhou Bao-zhong attached one of his platoons to our unit for joint operations. The expeditionary force left the camp at Badaohezi together with this platoon.

A few days later the first shot demonstrating the fraternal friendship and the proletarian internationalism of the Korean and Chinese communists rang out in Shitouhe near Lake Jingbo. The 200-strong Japanese "punitive" force which had left Beihutou after hearing about the appearance of our revolutionary army, became the target of our machineguns and was mowed down in the middle of Lake Jingbo.

Following this battle we struck a heavy blow against a Japanese army unit in the Fangshengou area. The myth of the "invincible imperial army" which had boasted of winning battle after battle in the vast area of north Manchuria began to disintegrate. This also constituted a breakthrough in the Japanese imperialists' plan for

the siege of the guerrilla zones in east Manchuria.

The Ningan people rejoiced over our victory, and spread the news of the *laogaoli* army.

Ping Nan-yang, the commander of the Ningan anti-Japanese guerrilla army, was the first to visit us when he heard the news. As we were marching toward Xiqinggouzi after a meeting with the hardcore party members of a district party organization in Nanhutou, who later helped the Wangqing guerrilla army both materially and morally, Ping appeared suddenly before me together with one of Zhou's orderlies and repeated excitedly, "Congratulations!" without even introducing himself.

I ordered the marching column to halt and spoke with him informally.

"Commander Kim Il Sung, the whole of north Manchuria is buzzing with the news of your victory. My men are delighted at the news. Let me hold the hand which makes the Japanese tremble."

Holding my hand in both of his, he looked me full in the face with an expression of friendship.

"I have received a report that some of my men in the north of Dongjingcheng have been attacked by the Jingan army. Whenever we meet the Japanese or the Jingan army we have a hard time of it. The thought of it makes my blood boil."

"Then, shall we try taking a turn with the Jingan army?"

"Commander Kim, if we fight together with you, we will become bolder and learn from you."

As Ping requested, I accepted his 40 men into our expeditionary force and sent Zhou's platoon back to his camp in Badaohezi, together with the orderly who had guided Ping to me. At the same time, I sent the soldiers of the Yanji company back to Jiandao, in view of the tense situation in east Manchuria resulting from the enemy's "punitive" operation.

When Ping came to me Zhou sent with him a messenger who had come from east Manchuria. This messenger told us about the situation in Jiandao.

As we were marching through Beihutou, I ordered the unit to leave only one set of footprints in the snow. Because we had to pass close by one of the enemy's assembly points, we had to conceal our tracks. Leaving one set of footprints meant that everyone in a rank of ten or a hundred men walked by stepping in the footprints of the man at the head of the column, so that it looked as if only one man had passed.

As he watched our companies teaching his soldiers how I had instructed them to march like a single man, to wipe away their trace, to disperse the unit during the march and to billet soldiers on a village, Ping commented that the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was well-versed in guerrilla warfare.

Together with Ping's unit we destroyed two battalions of the Jingan army led by Lieutenant Colonel Takeutsi in the Xinanzhen area, wiped out another Jingan army unit in a joint operation with an AJNA unit under the command of Zhongyang on the River Dahailanghe, and attacked a cavalry company and the 6th infantry

company of the Jiangan army in Laozhuanjia, Badaohezi.

As a result of these victorious battles, Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units which had been in difficult circumstances came one after another to join our expeditionary force.

After meeting briefly again with Zhou in his camp at Badaohezi, we crossed the River Mudan in late December, defeated a Jingan army unit and raided a puppet Manchukuo police station in Xinanzhen at the request of Daping, Sijihao, Zhanzhonghua, and Renyixia units of the AJNA. We launched these battles in order once again to enlist in the Ningan guerrilla army those AJNA units which had left Ping Nan-yang. While engaging in active operations on our initiative and dealing a succession of blows to the enemy, the Ningan guerrilla army continually expanded its ranks by enlisting AJNA units and other people in local areas who volunteered to join the army.

"Commander Kim, I have nothing to fear now. I am convinced that we can defeat both the Japanese and the Jingan army. I don't know how I can repay my great debt to you," Ping Nan-yang said confidently, squeezing my hand, on the day when we fought the Jingan army in Xinanzhen.

"Don't mention it. I hope you will destroy as many of the enemy as possible. An army is toughened through battle, isn't it?" I encouraged him enthusiastically, grasping his hands.

During our expedition we also met Chai Shi-rong and Jiang Ai-min and discussed the anti-Japanese allied front with them.

Jiang Ai-min, who had been routed by the 13th brigade of the

Japanese army, went to east Manchuria to meet me and then came back after hearing that we were fighting in north Manchuria. He appeared unbelievably cheerful and high-spirited for a commander who lost many battles.

"To tell you the truth, I went to Wangqing to request your assistance. Fang Zhen-sheng said that he was sorry he could not help me because they were also in difficult circumstances. Commander Kim, please help me." Jiang Ai-min spoke frankly about his problem without concern for his honour as the commander of a great unit.

Fang was a Chinese who became a regimental commander of our army after we came to north Manchuria.

We achieved a great deal through joint operations with Ping's unit and other large and small AJNA units. The military and political objectives we had set for the expedition were being achieved rather smoothly.

When we later returned to Jiandao after completing our expedition, we heard the glad news that Zhou Bao-zhong had successfully formed the 5th Army Corps of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army, based on the Ningan anti-Japanese guerrilla army. Most of the Chinese AJNA units which had developed a strong militant relationship with us through the fighting in deep snow in north Manchuria joined the 5th Army Corps.

Many of the cadres of the 5th Army Corps were my intimate friends in the days of the expedition to north Manchuria. Ping Nan-yang became the commander of the 1st Regiment of the 1st

Division and then was promoted to division commander; Chai Shi-rong was appointed commander of the 2nd Division before being promoted to a deputy corps commander. Jiang Ai-min was in command of the 5th Regiment of the 2nd Division. His unit had many Korean communists who had shared bloody battles with us.

On hearing the news of the formation of the 5th Army Corps, I wished Zhou success, picturing in my mind the land of Ningan, far beyond Laoyeling.

Together with the battle of Luozigou, the first expedition to north Manchuria marked our first success in frustrating the enemy's plan for a siege, and made a significant contribution to defeating the enemy. Our offensive routed the main force of the 13th brigade of the Japanese army and the Jingan army unit in Ningan.

We shed much blood in north Manchuria. The political instructor of the Yanji company and the young orderly Ri Song Rim fell in battle. This was the bitterest loss to me.

Ri Song Rim was the first orderly whom we had recruited on our arrival in Wangqing. He had been orphaned by the Japanese "punitive" operation. We took him and raised him, providing him with clothes and teaching him to read and write. He had grown into a quite handsome boy. He would sleep, with his arm round my neck. Ryang Song Ryong had said that a grown boy should not be indulged if he was to become a man and that he should be sent to the Children's Corps school.

Ri Song Rim cried and said he would not go.

Ryang had begun to hate him since Ri began visiting the Children's Corps school to show off the small pistol which I had given him. One day, when we were at a meeting, he had gone to the school in secret and called out the snotty children who were playing in the yard to the willowy dike to show off his pistol. Before he had disassembled the pistol and reassembled it, the break was over. When the teacher came into the classroom to begin the new lesson, he was surprised, and called out the children's name. None of the children who had gone out to see Ri's pistol had come back.

Ryang heard this story and suggested to me I should replace the orderly with another man because he might cause an accident.

But I did not accept his suggestion.

Ri Song Rim had been to Onsong and Jongsong with me, and stayed for a long time on the mountain at the back of Tumen. He was a plucky and courageous orderly who was not afraid of death.

I remember he was killed in battle near Tuanshanzi. We were fiercely attacked from two sides by the Japanese army and the Jiangan army. As he was running to convey my orders to Ping's unit, he was surprised by the enemy. I saw his Mauser after he died. The magazine was empty and there were several dead bodies of the enemy scattered around him. He made the enemy pay dearly for the blood he shed. We cried so sadly that Ping Nan-yang also cried loudly.

When I found Ri's dead body on the field of our victory the first thing I saw in my mind's eye was the Children's Corps school in

Wangqing which he had visited as if it were his own home. In this school he was one of many childhood friends who were inseparable from each other.

How could I meet the Children's Corps members of Wangqing after burying Song Rim in north Manchuria? I choked on my tears, and there was a lump in my throat.

When my comrades-in-arms suggested we break the frozen ground and bury him, I dissuaded them from covering his body with frozen earth because I felt as if he would come to life again and snuggle into my bosom. I could not turn on my heel knowing I had to leave my child orderly in this terribly frozen land.

Ri Song Rim, who complained of the steepness of the mountain as we crossed the Laoyeling Mountains, is now lying quietly in that valley with his comrades-in-arms, listening to the song of new life ringing across the vastness of Manchuria.

4. The Sound of the Mouthorgan Ringing across Ningan

Nothing makes an army suffer more misery than being given the cold shoulder by the people for whom it is fighting. The reader may find it hard to believe that we were given the cold shoulder from the time we began crossing the Laoyeling Mountains. And he might ask, "Have the people, the creator, defender and carrier of morals, ever turned away their faces from the revolutionary army or treated coldly the army which defends their interests?"

I am obliged to contradict common sense and say that I have had such an experience.

Everyone knew that Ningan, with its fertile land, was a great granary. But, when we came down from the Laoyeling Mountains and entered north Manchuria, the people in Ningan hated even to prepare meals for us. If they had treated us inhospitably because they were in dire poverty, we would have felt pity for them. But they turned their backs on us because of misunderstanding and distrust, and this dumbfounded us, for we were accustomed to support and hospitality from the people. If our expeditionary

soldiers in their snow shoes and puttees appeared in the distance, they would call their women into the houses and shut their doors, shouting, “The ‘Koryo red army’ is coming!” And then they watched our every move cautiously. Such unpleasant experiences hurt our pride.

We had to prepare our meals and sleep in the open for a good while. Life had never been like this in Jiandao. Whenever we returned home in triumph, the people in east Manchuria would run to welcome us in groups, beating drums and gongs, clapping their hands and presenting bouquets to us. Some people would offer us hot water or boiled green maize. One day a pine arch was even erected in Macun to congratulate the soldiers.

But the Ningan people gave us a wide berth. We sent out scouts and set the underground organizations in action, but we failed to catch the voice of the people in this region. This was a much cooler welcome than we had expected in east Manchuria on the basis of information from Zhou Bao-zhong and Ko Pobae, who had often visited north Manchuria.

There was a village called Wolianghe in Ningan County. It was called Wolianghe because it had fertile land and plenty of food grain, but the people there ignored us completely, and did not even think of providing food.

We tried to gather them together to initiate political work, but they did not respond to our request. We could not even give them a lecture on current events. Ri Song Rim may have complained of the steep Laoye- ling Mountains, but this barrier was rougher and

steeper.

Some of my men said that Ninganites were cold-blooded people by nature, but I rejected this. The mind of the people may vary a little, but it was hardly possible that the people in this place were the only ones to lack the good manners and customs of Chinese or Koreans, who accord hospitality to their guests and take good care of them.

What, then, was the reason for this unfriendly attitude of the Ningan people, which stunned the men of our expeditionary force?

According to the historical record, in olden times Ningan was the capital of Palhae. This time-honoured city once had a population of 100,000.

This indicated that this place had a long history of development. The historical record also indicated that the land of this place was fertile and its people were industrious, frugal, simple-hearted, and trustworthy and respected justice and law.

After the capital of Palhae was moved to another place and its people were scattered in all directions, its population increased or decreased over the millennia and scores of generations, but the courtesy and civilized customs of the Ninganites were neither debased nor dishonoured, but handed down without change.

It was unreasonable to believe that the Ningan people were cold-hearted by nature.

Some soldiers alleged that Ningan was not a suitable place for the communist movement. They said that, firstly, the level of consciousness of these people was too low to assimilate the

communist idea, and secondly, that Ningan County had abundant land, whereas the number of farmers who cultivated it was comparably small, so there would not be any antagonism in social and class relations and, accordingly, a class struggle would not take place.

Such nihilistic assertions were refuted mercilessly. Is any particular place suitable for communism while any other place is not suitable for communism? Communists who say so cannot win the world. With this kind of communism we cannot realize the slogan "Workers of the Whole World, Unite!" which is written in *The Communist Manifesto*. The argument that there would be no antagonism in people's relations in a place where the population was thin and land was plentiful was a superficial view which resulted from an ignorance of reality. According to such an argument, the class contradictions should have been acuter in densely populated Germany than in sparsely populated Russia and accordingly, the revolution should have achieved victory in Germany earlier than in Russia. I rejected such arguments as unfounded.

I said the fact that the Ningan people did not understand communism and were hostile to the communists should be explained by the crimes of the Japanese imperialists, who resorted to every conceivable means to destroy communism. When the communist movement became active in Ningan, the Japanese imperialists immediately launched a pernicious anti-communist propaganda campaign to drive a wedge between the communists

and the people. In Ningan, where the people were relatively backward in their political and ideological enlightenment, the enemy's propaganda penetrated easily into the people's minds.

The early Korean communists who had spent their energies in factional strife were also to blame for the anti-communist tendency prevailing in the Ningan area. Already in the mid-1920s, immediately after a communist party was founded in Korea, the Tuesday group established its organization under the magnificent name of the Manchurian general bureau of the Korean Communist Party, and set about expanding the power of its own group, effectively selling out the noble name of communism. They provoked the simple and good-natured people to engage in reckless demonstrations and riots by clamouring for the independence of Korea and the immediate building of socialism.

The ultra-Leftists broadcast an appeal to the Ningan people to rise up in the May 30 Uprising. The main targets of this uprising in Jiandao were the Japanese government organs for colonial rule and the Chinese landlords, but in Ningan the target was the nationalist organizations, such as the Korean General Association. The demonstration, which started in the county town, suffered a heavy blow at the very outset.

The May Day demonstration in 1932, too, ended by drowning the Ningan county town in a bloodbath and exposing the core elements to repression by the enemy. As a result of these adventuristic demonstrations, the revolutionary organizations in Ningan were destroyed as groups. After the May Day

demonstration the communist movement in Ningan went into a rapid decline. The party leadership stopped developing the armed forces and guerrilla zones and dispersed to Muling, Dongning, Wangqing and other places. Some people gave up the revolution and went back to the Ningan county town.

The indiscriminate white terrorism of the Japanese imperialists and the Manchukuo army and police besmirched the image of communism in the eyes of the people.

The fear of prison and death which they faced at the end of their struggle made them tremble in despair. The nihilistic view was prevalent among many people that the result of revolution was death, and it would be pointless to take part in the communist movement.

The Chinese communists came and tried to rebuild the revolution in Ningan, after the Korean communists had left declaring the attempt was futile and the revolution would not take root in the minds of the masses, but they also were dumbfounded at the cold attitude of the masses towards the revolution in general.

Some Korean nationalists were also to blame for spreading anti-communist poison in Ningan. The remnants of the Independence Army which fled to Russia in fright at the large-scale "punitive" operations in the year of Kyongsin (1920), and then returned to Ningan following the Heihe incident[15] were fanatical in their anti-Soviet, anti-communist propaganda. They slandered communism and the Soviet Union, saying that the dreadful incident in Heihe had been provoked by the Korean communists in exile in

conspiracy with the Soviet Union. The nationalists even went so far as to say that Kim Jwa Jin was killed because of the communists. Of course, this was a lie. But the innocent people believed it.

The people in Ningan were wary not just of communism but of any army. They hated all armies, regardless of their identity and their mission, because they considered every army they had seen to be hangers-on who emptied their granaries and took their money. To say nothing of the Japanese army and the puppet Manchukuo army, some Chinese nationalist army units who professed the anti-Japanese national salvation struggle, also took the people's money, grains and domestic animals. The Korean nationalists set up the Sinmin-bu, an administrative organization, in Ningan, and exacted war funds and military provisions from the people. What is worse, the local bandits who frequently took people hostage, could fall upon them at any time and aggravate their mood. So the feelings of the people, who had to submit to all of these factions, were beyond description. Taking this historical background into consideration, it would have been unreasonable to blame them for their cold-heartedness. It is not really of much significance that the expeditionary force did not receive supplies from the people. The greatest problem was that one of the major aims of our expedition, the aim of sowing the seeds of revolution among the people of north Manchuria, was not being achieved. If the people would never open their hearts to us, we would never find a way to

revolutionize north Manchuria.

In order to summon the Ningan people to rise in revolution we had to make a breakthrough somehow.

While taking stock of the party work in the Badaohezi district, we developed a deeper grasp of the reality of Ningan County with the help of Kim Paek Ryong, secretary of the district party committee. According to him, Badaohezi had been more effectively revolutionized than any other part of Ningan County.

Badaohezi was also known as Xiaolaidipan, the place where the Ningan county party committee and the Badaohezi district party committee were located. The word Xiaolaidipan was derived from the name of Kim So Rae (Xiaolai is the Chinese pronunciation of So Rae), who was the leader of the Taejong religion in and around Helong County.

I first heard about Kim So Rae from So Jung Sok when I attended the Jilin Yuwen Middle School. So Jung Sok once taught at the Konwon School in Helong, which was established by Kim So Rae. Kim So Rae was the founder and headmaster of this school and had close relations with So Il as well as the important figures of the northern military and political administration and the Jiandao National Association. As a man of a strong anti-Japanese sentiment, he supported the national salvation movement by sending his school graduates to the Independence Army units led by such renowned generals as Hong Pom Do and Kim Jwa Jin.

After the Independence Army withdrew from north Jiandao, Kim So Rae bought land in the Badaohezi valley and became a

landlord there, supplying war funds to Kim Jwa Jin's Independence Army unit. Ri Kwang also obtained many rifles from him immediately after the guerrilla army was founded.

The revolutionaries in the Ningan area disliked him because he was the leader of the Taejong religion. Some of those who were ignorant of history mistook this movement for a Japanese religion. The Taejong religion was a pure Korean religion, which worshipped *Hwanin*, *Hwanung* and *Hwangom*, the Gods who are described in the Korea-founding myth.

Kim Paek Ryong said that the Badaohezi valley was 20 to 25 miles long. There were many villages scattered in the valley and Koreans made up a considerable proportion of the inhabitants. Badaohezi, which had once been a thriving supply base for the Independence Army, became a base for the activity of the Ningan guerrilla army at the beginning of the 1930s.

Without any great hope, I employed the good offices of Kim Paek Ryong to send a political work team to a village in Badaohezi to inquire into the mood of the population and also to reconnoitre the enemy's movements. The team was made up of masters of propaganda and agitation.

However, Wang Tae Hung, the political instructor of the 5th company, who led the team to the village, came back to me looking exhausted.

"We failed again. Any amusing story fell flat with them. I would rather preach the Four Books and Three Classics to the ear of an ox than talk to the Ningan people."

He dropped his head in despair after making his report. Listening to his words, Kim Paek Ryong heaved a sigh, as if it were his mistake that the Ninganites were treating the guests from east Manchuria so coldly.

"Anyhow, the Ningan people are a real problem. We have made great efforts to persuade them, even sending an inspection group to east Manchuria to learn from their experience, but they are so stubborn. After the inspection group returned they established a Children' Corps school which enrolled about 50 pupils at first, but it all came to nothing."

What should we make of people who turned their backs on revolutionaries who defended and represented their interests? I pondered deeply on this question because I was facing such a sheer barrier for the first time in my life. Our efforts to revolutionize Fuerhe and Wujiazi had not gone entirely smoothly, but the people there were not so cold-hearted as in Ningan.

In the thousands of years of Korean history the masses of the people had never been bad. In my life I had never had to distinguish between good and bad masses of the people. Those who besmirched history and sought to deceive it were a handful of people, the ruling circles. Of course, there were individual traitors to the nation, misers, swindlers, imposters, ambitious men and immoral men. But they were only a few unhulled grains among the cleaned rice. The great mass of the people, which we can regard as representing the whole of this world, has always driven the wheel of history forward honestly and sincerely. They produced turtle

boats[16] and built pyramids if necessary. When the times required their blood they dashed towards the enemy's pillbox, braving death without hesitation.

The problem was that we had failed to find a way to touch the hearts of the Ningan people.

The political work team led by Wang Tae Hung had clearly conducted a stirring anti-Japanese propaganda campaign. Did the Ningan people need more of such speeches? They must have heard enough of them until to burn their ears. The Independence Army, the national salvation army, and even the bandits used to make such speeches. Could Wang's political work succeed on the basis of speeches?

Their mistake was that they tried blindly to teach the people. Since when did we regard ourselves as the people's teachers and the people as our pupils? No doubt it was the communists' mission to lead the people from darkness to light, but wasn't it impudent of us to pose as their teachers?

There might be many ways for us to penetrate the depths of people's hearts, but their hearts would accept only sincerity. Only sincerity could fuse our blood and their blood as in one artery. Unless we mixed with the people as their own sons, grandsons and brothers, we would be forsaken for ever by the people of Ningan.

I was told that when the Wangqing children's art troupe played in Ningan, the performance hall was crowded out every time. Both the children's art troupe and the guerrillas appealed to them in the name of the revolution, but the people had welcomed the former

and turned their backs on the latter.

"Did you see the performance of our children's art troupe when they came here?" I asked Kim Paek Ryong.

"Yes, I did, their performance was excellent." He said the art troupe had set Ningan buzzing with excitement.

"Wherever the children's art troupe went there were crowds of people, I was told. A wonderful change to take place among the Ningan people, who did not like communist propaganda, wasn't it? What do you think attracted so many people?"

"The children behaved quite charmingly. They fascinated the Ningan people by their performances and influenced them by always laughing as brightly as the full moon in the clear sky. They behaved with people like their own fathers and mothers, so the Ninganites, no matter how callous, could not but be moved."

"Their talent made them very popular in Wangqing, too."

"Of course, their performance was a success, but it was the children themselves who won the people's hearts. I myself was charmed by their good behaviour. They cleaned up all of Badaohezi village. They used to get up early to make the village spick and span. In daytime they helped the peasants in the field."

Kim Paek Ryong praised the children's art troupe members repeatedly, making me feel proud of them.

"They have become sensible at an early age."

"The children endeared themselves to the villagers. When they saw the villagers, even in the distance, they raised their hands in salute. They followed the grown-ups, addressing them as

‘grandfather,’ ‘father,’ ‘aunt,’ ‘sister.’ They were loved by the whole village.”

The children’s art troupe won the people’s hearts because they gave their own hearts to the people. When we dropped an axe into an ice hole in the Tuman River, we spent half a day in sincere efforts to find it. Why? Because we were devoted to the people and loved them. When we showed them our sincerity, they never rejected it.

Wang’s political work team made a mistake, because they failed to give their hearts sincerely to the people. They clung to their method only with the intention of revolutionizing the people of north Manchuria, but they never thought of loving them and becoming intimate with them. It was not strange that the people in north Manchuria had not opened their hearts to us.

First of all, it was a mistake to have started their contact with the people with a speech. How valuable the lesson we learned from the activities of the Wangqing children’s art troupe, which first gave the people their own hearts and then tugged at their heartstrings with songs!

I made up my mind to change the form of our political work and discussed the matter with our commanding officers. I then instructed the company political instructors to bring all our good mouthorgan players to the headquarters. When they had gathered I checked them one by one.

Hong Pom from the Yanji company played the mouthorgan well enough to perk up an audience. He sometimes produced the

sound of an accordion concert on his harmonica. A soldier of the Wangqing 5th company was famous for mouthorgan playing, but he was a novice compared with Hong.

Hong Pom had practised the mouthorgan from his primary school days. A visitor to his house once left a mouthorgan in his room and did not come again, so it naturally became Hong's favourite. Practising on this instrument for several years he developed his talent admirably, but the mouthorgan became worn out and its gilt came off. Fortunately its sound remained unchanged.

I saw his mouthorgan as we were preparing for the expedition in Duitoulazi and thought I should obtain a new one for him. But I had no chance to do this before we had to leave for north Manchuria.

Many of the guerrillas and other people in Jiandao knew of Hong Pom's career. He was an ordinary soldier, but he became a topic of interested discussion among the people because of his extraordinary talent in playing the mouthorgan. Mouthorgan players were always loved by their comrades-in-arms.

Hong's native town was Jongsong, North Hamgyong Province. He followed his parents to Jiandao and took part in the revolutionary movement from his young days. Once as a Red Guards man he joined in the mass struggle to frustrate the Dunhua-Tumen railway project. After the dissolution of the Hailangou guerrilla zone, he moved to Wangougou, carrying his knapsack with a mouthorgan in it, and joined the guerrilla army.

I instructed Wang Tae Hung to take the mouthorgan concert group to the village where he had failed once and to try to move their hearts. And I requested Kim Paek Ryong to buy as many mouthorgans as possible, with the help of the underground organizations.

That day I visited the secretariat of the Ningan county party committee to prepare the propaganda materials for the people. While I was talking to the comrades at the secretariat, Wang, who had been to the village with the mouthorgan concert group, appeared before me with a broad smile on his face.

"Comrade Commander, it was a success. Those uncouth persons opened their hearts to us at last."

Wang was a commanding officer of a particular character, who first reported the result, and then explained what he had done. The activity of the mouthorgan concert group was extremely instructive. It won the hearts of the callous people who had turned their backs on the revolutionary army.

The group started by clearing the snow from the front yard of a house in the centre of the village. After posting a sentry on this fairly large area of ground, Hong Pom and another man played a mouthorgan duet as the first item on the programme. The rest of the group danced to the tune of mouthorgans. Two or three boys who were spinning tops in a nearby lane ran towards the fence of the yard to watch the performance. Other children also came running towards the show from other lanes, hitching up the waistbands of their trousers as they came.

The mouthorgan duet began with *The Song of General Mobilization*, then changed into *The Children's Song* and *How Far Have We Come?* The children, charmed by the beautiful melody of Hong's mouthorgan, followed the song and clapped their hands. Some children ran about the village shouting that the "Koryo red army" soldiers from Jiandao were dancing. When the grown-ups heard the news, they watched the revolutionary army's entertainments from a distance with folded arms. Then some of them approached the performance and gazed at the "musicians" of the "Koryo red army."

When 40 to 50 people had gathered to see the performance, the mouthorgan concert group played *Arirang*. This attracted the whole village, and the audience rapidly increased to one hundred, two hundred and at last three hundred.

At this moment Ko Pobae appeared and sang the *Melancholy Song of Phyongan Province*. The hundreds of villagers were captivated by his sorrowful melody and encircled the yard in a tight ring, straining their ears to catch the sounds issuing from the mouth of this soldier of the "Koryo red army."

Ko stopped singing halfway and began delivering a speech in a new dramatic tone.

"Dear villagers, where's your home town? North Kyongsang Province! Kangwon Province! South Hamgyong Province! South Phyongan Province! Don't ask me where I come from. Don't think I'm putting on airs. I don't know where I was born. I know only that I was born in a coastal village in Korea. I arrived in Jiandao,

crossing the river on my parent's back. I don't know whether it was the Tuman River or the Amnok River. I am such a dunce."

The audience was amused by his oratorical talent, laughing and whispering in response.

In an amusing manner, like an old story-teller, he told how he wandered about Jiandao like a dried leaf and how he finished off Japs in many battles after he became a guerrilla soldier. Then, as if he had simply turned over a gramophone record, he changed his subject quite naturally into a speech intended to awaken the people to the need for the revolution.

"Dear villagers, what is our unanimous desire? We wish we could return home. But the Japs stand on the road to our homeland. Should we leave those barbarians alone? No, I can't. So I joined the guerrilla army with a rifle in my hand. We came to Ningan to destroy the Japanese. I was told that the Japanese soldiers in north Manchuria are more arrogant."

When his speech reached this point, a Japanese army cap appeared from nowhere on his head. He had hidden it in the waistband of his trousers and transferred it in a flash to his head. Then a moustache and spectacles appeared on his face. The audience immediately grasped that he was made up as a Japanese army officer.

In this comic make-up Ko Pobae stretched himself in a yawn and walked round the yard two or three times with his hands folded behind his back, stretching his jaw and twitching his face in a funny fashion. The people were reminded of a Japanese army

officer taking a walk in the ground of his barracks immediately after rising from his bed.

The audience tittered at first and then split their sides in laughter.

As soon as laughter calmed down, Ko went round the audience one by one, laughing in different kinds according to their sex and age—an old woman's voice before a grandmother, an old man's voice before a grandfather and a bride's voice before a young lady. They laughed themselves into convulsions, until the tears came running down.

After winning over the villagers in this way, the mouthorgan concert group launched into anti-Japanese propaganda and appealed to the people to support the revolutionary army. The mouthorgan concert group was able to have such remarkable success in the very place where the political work team failed the previous day, because their propaganda catered honestly to the feelings of the villagers.

Drawing on this experience, we began to mix more closely with the people and revolutionized tens of villages in Ningan one after another by various methods. The iron barrier which had separated the Ningan people from the "Koryo red army" from east Manchuria was removed at last. Where the "Koryo red army" had once passed by, the ranks of the Communist Party increased in numbers, and the Young Communist League, the Women's Association, the Children's Corps and other revolutionary organizations expanded rapidly.

The people who opened their hearts wide to the communists experienced the greatest pride of their life in supporting and assisting the revolutionary army.

Among such people I still recall many unforgettable men and women such as old man Kim in the Tianqiaoling timber mill, old man Jo Thaek Ju in Dawaizi, the old Chinese woman Meng Cheng-fu in Wolianghe and old man Ri in Nanhutou.

Old woman Meng frequently gave the expeditionary force valuable information about the enemy's movements, though she once suffered all sorts of hardships when she was arrested by the Japanese police together with the wife of her husband's cousin.

Old man Ri in Nanhutou was under constant surveillance by the enemy. The enemy set fire to his eight-*kan* house (a *kan* is equivalent to 36 square feet—Tr.) because he supported the guerrilla army. Once he was arrested by the military police and severely flogged. Despite these bitter experiences, he frequently visited our revolutionary army's camp, bringing with him food and footwear for the soldiers.

"Are you not afraid of the enemy, grandfather?" I once asked him.

"Yes, I am afraid," the old man replied. "If the enemy knew that I sent supplies to the revolutionary army, my whole family, including my three sons, would be killed. But we have no other choice. We cannot remain indifferent and consider only our own safety, while you revolutionary army soldiers are enduring every possible hardship in order to liberate the country, with no place to

sleep comfortably and no decent meals."

The people in north Manchuria cherished ardent love for their country and for justice.

Their love for the country was no less warm than that of the east Manchurian people. The only difference was that their love had been hemmed in by a much thicker and higher fence.

The people open their hearts without hesitation to those who sympathize with them and understand them, and embrace them with burning enthusiasm. But they slam the door against those ingrates who have never thought about the fact that the soil in which they grew up was the people, those impertinent fellows who consider that the people are duty-bound to serve them, and they have the right to be served, those bureaucrats who think they can rule over the people as they like, those exploiters who regard the people as a cow which produces milk any time they want, those windbags who shut their eyes and remain indifferent when the people are suffering agony, though they always say that they love the people, all of these hypocrites, loafers and swindlers.

None of my comrades-in-arms now alive can recall the first north Manchurian expedition. Only a few out of those 170 men returned to the liberated homeland. I think O Jun Ok and Yon Hui Su were among the Wangqing company soldiers who returned.

When we were operating in Ningan, Kang Kon was a Children's Corps member. Judging from his age alone, he could well have lived till now and taken part in the revolution. But he fell in action on the front line in early autumn of the year when the

great Fatherland Liberation War broke out. At that time he was the Chief of the General Staff of the Korean People's Army.

Ko Pobae later served as a regiment political commissar in the 5th Army Corps under Zhou Bao-zhong's command.

Some people say he fell in action and others say that he went to the Soviet Union and died there, but I do not know which is the truth. When I received the news of the death of such a talented optimist, who always set the whole of Jiandao laughing with his ceaseless jokes and wisecracks, I could not believe it. It seemed inconceivable to me that such an optimist could have died.

The majority of the mouthorgan concert group who opened the path to north Manchuria with Ko Pobae remained in north Manchuria at Zhou Bao-zhong's request or died in fierce battles on the way back to east Manchuria. I heard nothing about the rest of them afterwards.

I cannot find any way to clarify what happened to them. Even their names have grown dim in my memory.

One day half a century after the first north Manchurian expedition, I received the happy news that one of the participants in the expedition was living in Pyongyang. When I looked at the picture which the officials involved sent to me, I saw that it was Hong Pom, the leader of the mouthorgan concert group.

The severe snowstorm by which we were threatened in north Manchuria, and the unprecedentedly arduous march we had made through the snowstorm had left their clear imprints around his eyes. His face was changed beyond recognition by the ceaseless

toil of the years of a long life, but to my joy, his unusually long neck, like a stork's, still reminded me of how he looked in his younger days.

Was this really the famous mouthorgan player Hong Pom who basked in the love of all the people of Jiandao? Why had this treasure, a participant and witness of the first expedition to north Manchuria, only now announced his presence after living near me all this time?

I told the officials to ask him why.

He had not called on me because he was too simple, and too modest.

"I took part in the anti-Japanese revolution, but I rendered no distinguished service. If I have ever done anything I can feel proud of, it is that I took part in the first expedition to north Manchuria under the command of our leader. After returning from north Manchuria I caught a fever in the backwoods of Sandaowan, and suffering from it for a long time, I was unaware even of the dissolution of guerrilla zones. Having lost all contact with the unit, I returned home. If I had said that I was an anti-Japanese war veteran, the Party would have cared for me like a precious treasure. But I did not wish to be a burden to the Party." These were the words of Hong Pom, an anti-Japanese war veteran.

At the age of 70 he was working as a guard at the Jonsung security substation. He was living in a single-room house. While the musicians of the new generation who were born in the 1950s or 1960s were moving into new three-room or four-room houses, this

mouthorgan player of the guerrilla army, who went through all the hardships of the long-drawn-out war against the Japanese, contented himself with a single-room house. He did not desire any special treatment or any privileges.

All our anti-Japanese war veterans are such people.

Hong Pom is said to have kept all his life the mouthorgan which I bought for him in Ningan. When our historians called on him to collect historical materials, Hong Pom used this mouthorgan to play the revolutionary songs which we had sung during the north Manchurian expedition. They said that Hong was an excellent player.

He died after moving to a new flat in Kwangbok Street provided by the Party.

Our veterans, who had endured severe trials such as the north Manchurian expedition and the arduous march, continued to overcome all manner of hardships together with us even after returning to the liberated homeland.

What a profound and appealing truth is contained in the old saying that the hardships one experiences in one's younger days are worth more than one's weight in gold! Hardships and trials are the mother of all blessings.

5. The Snowstorm in the Tianqiaoling Mountains

Late in January 1935, our expeditionary force set out on its return journey after carrying out its military and political tasks.

When it left Duitoulazi, Wangqing, the unit had been 170 strong, but now there were only 50 to 60 men left. After the Yanji company left for east Manchuria at the beginning of the campaign, the Hunchun company, too, had withdrawn from Ningan. Their withdrawal had been necessary because of the pressing need to defend the strategic centre of the revolution against the enemy's schemes of siege. We had suffered many casualties in a succession of battles lasting three months. By the time the wounded soldiers had been evacuated to safe places, only one third of our force remained.

There was no source of reinforcements. When the expeditionary force stayed in the villages, many young people volunteered to join us, but we sent them to Zhou Bao-zhong's unit.

Zhou Bao-zhong was deeply concerned about our return journey.

“Available intelligence says that the enemy is tracking you frantically, Comrade Kim Il Sung. Apparently they wish to make you pay dearly. What hard blows they have suffered from you this winter! Frankly, I am concerned for your safety.” He looked at me anxiously.

“Thank you. The snowstorm in Laoyeling may cover our tracks again. Don’t worry too much. In any case, we shall return safely,” I said with a light heart, feeling grateful to him for being so considerate.

“Commander Kim, you are about to go through the jaws of death, but you are as carefree, and optimistic as ever.”

Zhou Bao-zhong advised us to take the safest and the most reliable route for our return march. In addition, he reinforced us with a detachment of 100 men from the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army. The route he had shown us was a roundabout way along the Tianqiaoling and Laoyeling Mountains and Barengou. It was not like the well-beaten path we had taken on our campaign to north Manchuria by way of Duitoulazi, Laoyeling and Badaohezi. The new route was a trail along mountain ridges which lay far away from enemy camps. Zhou said that the enemy could not even imagine that we would take this route.

Ping Nan-yang knew this route better than Zhou Bao-zhong. He stroked my arm as he said:

“If you slip away by the trail through Tianqiaoling Mountains everything may go well. There are timber mills there which have plenty of food. The ‘punitive’ troops seldom come near

Tianqiaoling, I assure you."

Tianqiaoling literally means a bridge under the sky. It is a steep mountain range which looks like a dangerous bridge.

Following the advice of our comrades in north Manchuria, we decided to take the roundabout route of Tianqiaoling-Laoyeling-Barengou to Jiandao. Two or three other mountain passes in Laoyeling had already been blocked by the enemy.

Our comrades-in-arms in north Manchuria gave us a hearty send-off as we left Zhou's mountain lodge.

Our hearts bled as we left for Jiandao, without even burying Ri Song Rim and many other fallen comrades, leaving them lying on the frozen ground without a pillow for their heads, without a tombstone to mark their resting-place.

Farewell, comrades-in-arms! When the country has won independence we will come again to see you. We are now returning, leaving you behind on the frozen ground in a far-off foreign land, but when liberation has come, we will carry you on our backs to the hills at the back of your home villages, we will set up tombstones over your graves, build stone offertory tables, plant flowers around them and hold memorial services for you every year. Good-bye, comrades.

With this thought I ordered the whole unit to take off their caps and pay three minutes' silent tribute to our comrades-in-arms who had fallen in the wilderness of north Manchuria.

That day heavy snow fell all day long, piling up ankle-deep, as if to console and cover our fallen comrades lying in their summer

clothes on the unknown hills and valleys of Ningan. The snow covered our footprints, assisting up hiding our tracks.

Even the heavy snowfall, however, could not completely conceal our march from the enemy's fieldglasses. While we were taking a short break on a 700-metre-high mountain ridge after eating the lunch we had received from the north Manchurian comrades on our departure, Japanese "punitive" troops appeared in the far distance.

It was a surprise to see the enemy in pursuit of us in this primeval forest, despite all the assurance Ping Nan-yang had given upon his oath of honour.

The men became wide-awake, and began wondering whether they had come the wrong way. Some of them even complained that now they would be unable to relax as they had wished to do on their way back. I thought that in this mental state it would be impossible for them to fight their way back successfully.

I felt they needed bucking up.

"Comrades, we have been living in enemy encirclement for years. We have been surrounded on all sides, even from the sky. Wherever we guerrillas were, the enemy was always all around us. When have any of you ever marched without an enemy in pursuit? How many marches have you made without hearing a gunshot or without fighting hand to hand, in the history of this war against the Japanese? We must be ready to fight on this march, too. Fighting is the only way to break through the enemy and reach Jiandao."

All the men bucked up at my words.

We sent out a reconnaissance party, which raided the enemy and took two scouts prisoner. Under their interrogation the prisoners now and then mentioned the name of the commander of a unit of the Jingan army, Yoshizaki, who had suffered many defeats in previous battles with us. In order to redeem his ignominious defeats Yoshizaki was pursuing us with a reinforced unit. These were the "punitive" troops who were chasing us.

The Jingan guerrilla army, which had been organized immediately after September 18 incident, as a special detachment to help the Kwantung Army under the direction of its staff officer, Major Komatsu, was the predecessor of the Jingan army, which consisted of both Japanese and Manchurians. In November 1932, the Jingan army was placed under the command of the puppet Manchukuo army, which was founded at that time, but two thirds of its officers, including its commander Major General Fujii Juro, were Japanese. The Jingan army had a cadet corps, most of which were 17 or 18 year-old secondary school leavers from Japan. The weapons and clothing for the Jingan army were supplied by the Kwantung Army. The Jingan army was known as the "red armband army" because its soldiers wore red armbands. They had been trained in the spirit of "always fighting in the battlefield" and imbued with "Seian-Tamashii" (Jingan spirit) as well as "Yamato-Tamashii" (Japanese spirit).

Most of the Chinese in this army were the children of the propertied class and spoke Japanese fluently.

The aim of this army of faithful dogs of the Japanese

imperialists was to counter the guerrilla warfare of the communists with its own guerrilla warfare. In fact, therefore, the main objective of this army was to annihilate our guerrilla army.

At the outset, the Jingan guerrilla army was a force of 3,000, which was a little more than one regiment of the Japanese army. Yoshizaki was the commander of the 1st infantry regiment of this army. Yoshizaki unit was the most tenacious and the most bestial of the Jingan army. Even the strongest of armies had to anticipate a bloody battle if they were engaged by this "punitive" force. Yoshizaki always had sufficient reserves for the immediate replacement of his casualties, he was ready for a prolonged engagement with the expeditionary force of the people's revolutionary army. But we had no reserves to replace our loss.

We had to exchange fire with the pursuing enemy four or five times every day. When we marched the enemy marched, and when we camped the enemy camped. They stuck to us like leeches until our tongues were lolling out of our heads from the chase.

As Zhou Bao-zhong had said, the Jingan army knew that I, Kim Il Sung, was in command of the unit, how strong we were and what tactics we were using. They also knew that there was no communist force in Tianqiaoling and its vicinity which could help us. In those days, the Japanese army had an efficient intelligence service. We were fighting an enemy who knew everything about us.

The enemy continually brought up fresh replacements, clamouring that to kill one communist at the cost of a hundred men

was a success because he could replace that many whereas we could not. The real intent of the Jingan army was to exterminate our expeditionary force from Jiandao even at the cost of 1,000 men. The enemy believed that if the expeditionary force was annihilated, that would be the end of Kim Il Sung, and that without Kim Il Sung the Korean communist army and its resistance to Manchukuo and Japan would collapse.

The Jingan army was a genuinely dogged and brutal army. Worse still, the snowstorms that year were so violent that we could hardly distinguish between friend and foe. Only by issuing a challenge could we tell the enemy from our own men and start a battle.

The soldiers of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army who had been in our company left us, unable to endure this severe trial. This tenacious and brutal enemy, pursuing them closely in the biting cold was a challenge beyond the imagination of the Chinese nationalist soldiers, who lacked the spirit of self-sacrifice. They did not protect us, but we protected them to the very last.

The food which Ping Nan-yang had prepared for our march soon ran out. For several days we had been trying to allay our hunger by licking snow balls. In the totally uninhabited wilderness of the forests, snow was the only thing we could get. We organized death-defying squads and raided the enemy camp several times, but the booty was not enough to feed the whole unit. When they were in the battlefield, the enemy did not carry much food with them either.

No matter how difficult the situation was, we had to get as far as the Tianqiaoling timber mill, for Ping Nan-yang had said there was plenty of food there.

With this hope we quickened our march, encouraging and helping one another.

Whenever we obtained food I offered my share to the men. Sometimes we divided a few pounds of maize among the whole unit. In such cases I often put the maize for my share into the mouths of young soldiers and allayed my hunger with snow. But how could snow give us any strength? We climbed up the slope desperately through the snowstorm.

Han Hung Gwon aroused our curiosity by saying that snow contained some nutritive substances. I thought the other men would refute him. But few of them spoke out against him. Most of them simply said that water might be more nutritious than snow, in order to amuse Han Hung Gwon.

I also spoke to support them, trying not to throw cold water on the joke which made them forget their hunger.

It was an ennobling though sad sight to see these men endeavouring to endure their hardships by amusing themselves with such a hypothesis.

I was told that during the long march of 25 thousand *ri* the Chinese comrades boiled leather belts and drank the water. We could also have done so, but we had no time to boil anything. Our march was so arduous that sometimes I had to stiffen my resolve by picturing in my mind the scenes in the novel *Iron Flood* which

I had read in Jilin.

Every night I stood sentry just like one of the men. In such a crisis it would have been improper to do only the things that a commander was supposed to do.

Just as the situation most urgently required the commander's abilities and skills of leadership, the men suffered another blow. I caught a chill on Tianqiaoling, and it was so bad that I could hardly walk. It was lack of food, sleep and rest that led to such a serious state of affairs.

A high fever and a terrible fit of shivering at last felled me into a snowdrift. If I had warmed myself at the campfire when I first began to shiver with cold, the illness would not have become so serious. But I ignored it for fear that my comrades-in-arms would worry about me. Consequently my limbs became cramped and at last I lost consciousness. I barely came to my senses, even after my comrades-in-arms massaged my arms and legs for a long time.

I was told that if a person with this sickness drank a cup of honey and warmed himself on a heated floor, he could sweat the cold out, but it was impossible to expect such luxury in an uninhabited wilderness at a height of 1,000 metres above sea level.

Han Hung Gwon and the men made a sleigh and spread a blanket of fur on it. My comrades seated me on the sleigh, wrapped me in a blanket and a roe deer skin, and took turns to pull the sleigh. They were so anxious for my safety that they felt like praying to God to halt the enemy's pursuit, but the enemy remained obdurate. To cross steep mountains while containing the

enemy's pursuit and pulling my sleigh was exhausting mental and physical toil.

Yoshizaki reinforced his pursuing troops with Kuto's company. Kuto was known as the "king of punitive operation." He was awarded the title of "war hero" after his death for his merited services in Manchuria. The remains of this "war hero" are said to have been preserved in the Yasukuni Shrine. When he appeared in Tianqiaoling Kuto gave his men the following orders: Kim Il Sung has lost his ability to command due to his serious illness. So we need not attack him. Simply pursue his unit until they are exhausted. Pick them off one by one while pursuing them. That way we will kill all his communist army within a month.

Using this tactic Kuto removed many of our men from the battle roll. The enemy's marksmanship was remarkable.

When I recovered consciousness, I saw only 16 men around me. I strained my eyes to look for more of them, but there were only 16. Where had the other comrades gone? Were those priceless comrades buried under the snow of Tianqiaoling? Such fancies sometimes flitted through my mind.

"Where is Wang Tae Hung?"

I was so parched with thirst that I could not make myself heard. So I drew out my Mauser from under the blanket and wrote letters on the snow with its handle. I looked up feebly at the company commander, Han Hung Gwon. He hung his head instead of giving an answer. I saw his Adam's apple moving up and down under his bearded jaw.

"The comrade political instructor fell in action," replied the platoon leader, Kim Thaek Gun, in a tearful voice. He was the man who had taken such great pains to nurse me when I was struck down by an eruptive typhus in Shiliping. His face, too, was bushy with a beard. Tear drops were trickling from his eyes.

When we were encircled by the enemy, the company political instructor, Wang Tae Hung, had formed a death-defying squad with Kim Thaek Gun and several other comrades, and they had fought hand-to-hand in an attempt to break through the surrounding enemy. He felled five enemy soldiers using his bayonet and the butt of his rifle. Then he, too, fell into the snow, never to rise again.

Wang Tae Hung was one of my most beloved military and political workers, as well as a brilliant fighter respected by everyone. Because his name was like a Chinese name and he spoke Chinese as fluently as Korean, people often took him for a Chinese, but he was a pure Korean. He played his part in helping the army and the people of north Manchuria. His fluent Chinese had made him welcome to Chinese people wherever he went. It was not without reason that Zhou Bao-zhong had insisted to have him under his command.

I regretted now not having left him with Zhou.... I mourned bitterly for my departed comrades-in-arms, feeling as if my soul and body were torn apart.

"The situation was so critical that we could not bury the comrade political instructor's body." The mournful and remorseful

voice of the platoon leader, Kim Thaek Gun, rang in my ears.

"There is plenty of snow here in north Manchuria. You could at least have buried his body in snow." The words were on the tip of my tongue. But the power of reason suppressed them.

Kim Thaek Gun had known very well what he should do, but the situation had been too pressing for the generous man to bury his dead comrade.

I wrote on the snow again using the handle of the Mauser.

"Do you remember the valley where Wang died?"

"Yes, how can I forget it?" replied Kim Thaek Gun.

"Well, when the thaw sets in we will come to bury him."

Whenever I wrote on the snow, the men moved the sleigh ahead little by little so that the letters would not overlap one another.

But we were not able to go back to Wang.

Many other comrades-in-arms also lay unburied there on Tianqiao- ling. When I recall them, I still feel my heart rending asunder. I feel that I owe a debt which I can never pay. How can I express my regret?

After liberation, when Jo Ki Chon completed his epic poem *Mt. Paektu*, he first called on me to show me his manuscript. I was the first to listen to his poem. Of course, his poetry was composed of jewel-like sentences, but I was fascinated by the content. Many passages of his poem touched my heartstrings.

You woodcutter, who works these mighty cliffs,
Cut carefully the trunks of these great trees—

Here in the wood they watch over the souls
Of warriors who died to save their country.
You traveller upon these grandiose peaks,
Touch not the rocks that lie along the road—
Beneath them—who can tell?—there yet may lie
The skeletons of warriors who died to save their people.

In this passage the writer expressed powerful feeling in describing the emotions of the political worker, Chol Ho, as he crossed the Amnok River to work in the homeland, after burying Yong Nam who was shot by the enemy.

As Jo Ki Chon chanted this passage both he and I shed tears. Listening to this passage I recalled the many Wang Tae Hungs whom we had left unburied in north Manchuria, as well as many Tianqiaolings. The skeletons of many of our revolutionary precursors and comrades-in-arms lie buried in the fields, mountains and rivers of Manchuria.

When I was Premier I once heard a story from a senior official of the Ministry of Education.

One day, a professor of the history faculty of Kim Il Sung University met with a wartime comrade-in-arms at his house. They chatted and reminisced over their old friendship. The guest made friends with the professor's only son, who was a kindergarten toddler. The boy was sitting on the guest's lap, fingering his collar, buttons and ribbons. When he touched the guest's hand, the boy got a shock.

It was an artificial hand, so it was not warm and it had no blood.

"Uncle, why is your hand like this?" the boy asked, holding the artificial hand in his.

"It had to be amputated because it was wounded in the war against the Americans."

"Do People's Army soldiers get wounded?"

"They may get wounded, and sometimes they may be killed."

When he heard this, the boy grew sulky. He did not believe that People's Army soldiers might be wounded or killed, because he believed that they never should be. The guest had offended the child's belief.

Until that time our illustrated books and films for children showed many enemy soldiers being killed, but very few People's Army soldiers, and so the children had believed that the soldiers of the People's Army or the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army could never be wounded or killed.

Our educators and writers have not taught the younger generation just how many lives were lost for the sake of victory in the revolutionary wars against the US and Japanese imperialists. We scaled the peak of victory in the great anti-Japanese war by enduring indescribable hardships and building a staircase out of the dead bodies of our comrades.

How could there possibly not be any sacrifice in the fight against this formidable enemy, the imperialists, who are deaf to any appeal or petition and are immune to terrorism? Death does not discriminate between friend and foe, between justice and

injustice. The only difference is in its significance; the death of a revolutionary soldier saves ten lives, the deaths of ten soldiers—a hundred lives, of a hundred soldiers—a thousand lives. That is the significance of the death of revolutionary soldiers.

Shortly after I heard about Wang's death I fainted again. I was suffering from a high fever, feeling as if my whole body were burning and this was accompanied by a dim state of consciousness in which I could not distinguish reality, dream and hallucination.

I was crossing Oga Mountain Pass, carrying a stretcher with Wang Tae Hung. On the stretcher Cha Kwang Su and Zhou Bao-zhong lay side by side with their heads on their arms. Strangely enough, I have never thought of Cha and Wang as being dead. Living men mix quite easily with the dead men and it is not in the least awkward. We have a long way to go and there is a high pass before us, but under the scorching sun of summer we breathe hard and feel very thirsty. The higher we climb up the mountain the more thirsty we feel. When my patience runs out I run to a pool and try to drink the still water. At that moment I hear a familiar voice saying, "Don't drink!" My mother, dressed in white clothes, together with my younger brother Yong Ju, is standing on the pass waving her hand. "Don't drink, that water's poisoned," says my mother. Looking into the water I am surprised. The pool is teeming with tadpoles the size of grapes. Why does she say the water is poisonous? To my eyes it looks like honey water or the clean water in the well at daybreak. I lie on my belly to drink the water. At that moment my mother warns me a second time. "I said you

must not drink!"

I was awakened by her warning. I looked up at the mountain pass, but I could not see either my mother or my brother.

No doubt it was only a dream, but it was a voice calling me which broke my dream.

"Brother Song Ju, for goodness' sake, open your eyes and come to. If you do not rise, our country will never rise again."

At the sound of this voice I recovered consciousness. Someone was looking full in my face, bending his body over the sleigh. It was Wal Ryong, a Young Communist League member, who had followed me, copying papers for me and helping me in other work, since the days when I worked in Jilin.

The snow-covered forest reflecting the bloody colour of the setting sun was gliding past behind the sleigh. The cold twilight sky was spinning above my head. Wal Ryong followed the sleigh calling me "Brother Song Ju, Brother Song Ju," tears trickling from his eyes. And another man, apparently O Tae Song, threw himself upon me and cried.

"Comrade Commander, if you die, Korea will be hopeless."

My comrades-in-arms who had been walking silently in front of and behind the sleigh burst into tears all at once. I wished to tell them not to cry, but I could not open my mouth. I was crying, too.

And then, I lost consciousness and lapsed into a coma.

The next morning, when I regained consciousness and opened my eyes, free for a short while from the high fever, I saw the sleigh was in an open place and my 16 comrades were collapsed

around it.

They were no longer in a position to take care of me. Instead, I had to console them. They were exhausted from hunger, thirst and ceaseless fighting for many days. They had endured innumerable hardships to save my life. For years we had triumphed over indescribable ordeals in Jiandao, but I had never seen them so haggard and so ragged as they were now.

My heart was heavy as I thought that we still had a long way to go, but these comrades, once so strong, were now so completely exhausted that they had collapsed on the ground. What was to be done? Had they any strength to rise again and return to Wangqing? They might be buried in this snowstorm for ever. What could I do if I were left alive alone? I had been able to fight all along, triumphing over every trial under the anti-Japanese banner, because they had looked up to me and supported me and because I had believed in them and relied on their strength in my struggle. Without them I could neither survive nor carry through the revolution. As they had saved my life, I must save their lives. Only when I rose again could I rescue them from graves in the snow and carry on with the revolution. But I did not have the strength to lift a finger. Alas! What could be done?

My consciousness dimmed again, as if shrouded in mist. I felt my heart breaking in frustration at the thought that the cause of my life for the sake of which I had soared in the blue sky like a fearless phoenix, was going to end here, with my wings clipped.

Suddenly I felt alarmed at the thought that if we could not get to

our feet again, our people, who looked up to us in the hope of national resurrection, would be grieved and disappointed. I trembled as if I had suffered an electric shock.

The Japanese imperialists would gloat over the grief of the Korean nation, and would take pleasure in our despair. If we went down on our knees, the millionaires and militarists of Japan would be delighted. The Japanese imperialists were waiting for us to starve and freeze to death or surrender to them in despair. History had not yet given us the right to die. If we became a handful of dirt without fulfilling our duty to history and the times, we would be unfilial sons not only to our families, but also to the nation that gave us birth and brought us up. We would never be unfilial sons.

I continued to think, raising myself by rubbing my drooping eyelids with snow dust.

If our revolutionary army disappeared for ever, buried in the snow and ice on Tianqiaoling, the Japanese repression of our people would grow still more oppressive, ten or a hundred times worse. The Japanese imperialists were making frantic efforts to exploit our people and make our nation their Emperor's subject even as we fought against them.

The Japanese imperialists were exploiting the Korean nation in order to recoup the losses caused by the economic blockade imposed upon them following Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933. The plan for the increased production of grain and the policy of increased production of cotton and silk enforced by governor-general Saito in the 1920s accelerated the class

differentiation of the Korean rural communities and forced many of peasants to desert their farmland and villages as paupers; the policy of industrializing Korea, the policy of encouraging gold production and the policy of producing cotton in the south and sheep in the north being applied by governor-general Ukaki were transforming the poor economy of our country into an appendix to the Japanese war economy. Steel, coal, cotton and sheep were all shipped to Japan to increase her wealth and to strengthen her armed forces.

The Korean language had been reduced to the status of a dialect. Progressive books were subjected to Japanese censorship. There were increasing numbers of military-drill grounds and prisons in the homeland. It was said that the notorious blood-stained Sodaemun prison in Seoul was being expanded because it was overflowing with our patriots. Japan's monopolists, warlords and their stooges were in crazed pursuit of the ideal of militarism, in their ambition to conquer the world. The Sino-Japanese war would break out any time now. It depended on when the Japanese warlords pulled the trigger. Because of the German and Japanese fascists, black clouds were gathering over the west and the east, threatening a new world war. When the counterrevolution was so rampant, how could we revolutionaries, who were resolved to defeat it, linger in despair, lamenting over our present adversity?

Even if the sky fell we had to do everything we could to stay alive and carry through the revolution. If we did not return alive, who could manage the piles of work in east Manchuria which was

awaiting our return? If we sank to our knees here, the Korean people would become the lifelong slaves of the Japanese imperialists.

Suddenly a poetic thought flashed in upon me. It was just the concept of a poem which became the song known nowadays as the *Song of the Anti-Japanese War.*

Louder is the sound of Japanese combat boots
Trampling upon our lovely land
Humiliating tens of millions of our people
Murdering, plundering and committing arson.

My parents, your brothers and their wives and children
Are shedding blood at the point of the Japs' bayonet.
My house and your farmland are reduced
To ashes and desert land by the enemy.

...

Rise and unite, the working masses
Do not betray our firm resolve, fight on.
Let's shout hurrahs of triumph
After defeating white terrorism under the red flag.

I shook Wal Ryong, who was lying near the sleigh, sat him up, and dictated the words of the song to him. Wal Ryong and I were the first to sing this song. One after another my comrades rose and

we sang together.

At about ten o'clock in the morning, we found the timber mill in Xipailinzi. We entered it hungry even for maize gruel and hoping to sweat out our chill.

That day my fever went over 40 degrees C. The only remedy in our situation was to eat maize gruel and drink Chinese liquor mixed with raw sugar.

If I sweated it out I would feel better, but I had been shivering with cold on the sleigh for a long time, so my illness was going from bad to worse every moment. Watching me suffer high fever and coma, my comrades felt our expeditionary force had no hope of finding a way out. Nobody felt that we would escape this crisis and return to Wangqing. They had apparently concluded that we had failed and they left absolutely everything to the company commander, Han Hung Gwon.

Han asked old man Kim, an employee at the timber mill, to boil up maize gruel. At that time we had eaten nothing for whole two days. At first my comrades took this old man for a Chinese because he was dressed in Chinese clothes and spoke in Chinese. When he learned that we were Korean guerrillas from Jiandao, the old man said that he was a Korean. He also said that his son was Kim Hae San, a commander of the guerrilla unit fighting in Badaohezi.

Kim Hae San was one of the participants in the winter Mingyuegou meeting in 1931. After sending his son to the guerrilla army, old man Kim raised crops on the mountain in

summer to earn his bread and did odd jobs in the timber mill in winter in order to buy salt, cooking oil and the like.

Shortly after our exchange of greetings with the old man, Han Hung Gwon received a report from the reconnaissance party that the enemy's "punitive" troops were approaching the timber mill.

At that moment Wal Ryong was boiling water for me on the fireplace in a pan without a lid, while drying my wet shoes. He cried to think that all was lost now that the commander was not recovering and there was no chance for us to break through the enemy encirclement. When he left Jilin after me his resolve had been really firm. He said that he would die if I died.

Old man Kim came into the kitchen with firewood in his arms and asked him why he was crying.

"The commander is ill... the 'punitive' troops have encircled us ring upon ring... within the hour they will rush into this mill, but we cannot find a way out. That's why I am crying. If we are to escape we must cross the river.... The river is deep and not frozen, so we cannot cross it. The other way for us to escape is to cross the bridge, but a company of the 'punitive' troops is keeping watch there. We are surrounded on all sides by the enemy."

Having heard Wal Ryong's complaint, the old man suggested to him a brilliant idea for breaking through the encirclement. "Young man, don't worry too much. While there's life there's hope. My master is a stooge of Manchukuo. He will come here soon. If he does you can arrest him. You must force him to lie to the 'punitive' troops so that they will not come to the timber mill.

Then you can stay here until evening. The next step can be discussed in the evening.”

Wal Ryong reported Kim’s words to Han Hung Gwon. Han talked with the old man on behalf of our party and they worked out a plan of escape.

Han followed the old man’s advice, tying up the master of the mill and criticizing him.

“You scoundrel, who allowed you to manage a timber mill? We have never recognized the state of Manchukuo. If you want to make up for your crime you must spare no effort to assist our army. How much will you contribute?”

From the very outset the master was submissive, intimidated by Han’s bluff, and by his tall and masculine figure which almost reached up to the ceiling.

“Yes, I will... as much as you want.”

Han Hung Gwon made such preposterous demands in terms of clothes, pigs and bags of wheat flour that the master almost fainted away when he was asked if he could contribute that amount.

“If you spare me, I will try to dissuade the ‘punitive’ troops from coming here while you are here.”

“Tell me how you will dissuade them.”

“I will say that the guerrillas escaped to somewhere else. Because I am on intimate terms with the officers of the ‘punitive’ troops they will trust me.”

“If you meet our demands we may forgive you. Our aim is to defeat the Japanese. If you want to atone for your crime and fight

the Japanese, you must help us."

"I will, just as you demand. You only have to release me."

The Chinese timber mill owner was so clever that he read our minds right away. He knew we did not covet his wealth, but only wanted to break through the encirclement and escape from danger. When the master asked who the commander was, Han replied that he was the commander in order to keep my identity secret. Pointing at me the master asked, "What's the matter with him?" Han said ambiguously that I was in bed because I was feeling unwell.

The master kept his promise. Thanks to his false information the "punitive" troops had still not appeared in the timber mill by dusk. At the mill we took one meal for breakfast and lunch and had supper in the evening. There was even pork on the supper table. Because I had lost my appetite I only drank maize gruel to allay my thirst.

After supper old man Kim proposed a second plan for our escape. It was another brilliant idea.

"The only problem is to get across the bridge, but that is very dangerous. Some clever move is needed. One way is to pass the sentry post by trickery, the other is to take the master to the bridge with you and make him deceive the sentries there. If they try to search you, you must not hesitate to knock them down and go across the bridge. After that you can climb the mountain with Commander Kim on your back. About five miles down from the bridge there is a deep ravine where you will find a small valley. At

the end of this valley there are three houses in which Koreans live. They went there to escape from the Japanese and they cultivate the land. I was told that they have not listed their names in the Manchukuo census records. With their help you will have no difficulty in treating Commander Kim."

Han Hung Gwon agreed with his suggestion, which pleased the old man. He added yet another plan.

"If anything unexpected happens while you're crossing the bridge, the platoon leader should hold off the enemy while the rest follow me. As company commander you must follow me carrying Commander Kim on your back, because you are tall and strong. If we cross the bridge, everything will go well even if the enemy pursue us, because I know the mountain inside out. If we cross the bridge without any incident, some of you can take the master and me somewhere close to the Ningan county town. And beat me a little and threaten the master.... Meanwhile the rest of you, with the company commander, should carry Commander Kim into the valley."

Han listened to what the old man said and then related his plan to me. I thought the plan was ideal.

Although he was not a military expert, the old man was a bold operation planner, the equal of a volunteer army commander. This father of a guerrilla army commander was a quite uncommon person. His plan for our escape was a brilliant idea which the average commanding officer could scarcely have conceived. Once again on that occasion I learned that the brains of our people were

a fount of wisdom which could discover a solution for any difficulty in the world. My faith that in times of difficulty we must go among the people has been derived from such experiences.

I left everything to Han Hung Gwon, saying that as I was a helpless invalid he should deal with everything as he considered appropriate. When night fell, Han demanded that the master prepare five horse-drawn sleighs. There were many horses in the timber mill. Platoon leader Kim Thaek Gun, a brilliant fighter, took the first sleigh together with the master, and I sat on the third sleigh.

The sentries of the Japanese and Manchurian mixed unit saw us and challenged us from the darkness, "Who goes there?" As we had instructed him, the master said calmly, "My men are ill and I am taking them to hospital, and I am going to Ningan to buy something."

The sentries recognized the master's voice and shouted "Pass!" without even approaching the sleigh.

The five horse-drawn sleighs crossed the bridge at a lightning speed. The sleigh bumped so terribly that the vibration of the wooden bridge shook me even through the fur on which I was sitting. Under the bridge the river was roaring in full spate. This river was a major tributary of the River Mudan.

"That's well done! May it never be otherwise."

After the sleighs had crossed the bridge old man Kim embraced Han for joy.

This adventure, which was like some legend or detective story,

ended well for us, the next stage also going smoothly, as we had planned. But for old man Kim, I would not have been plucked from the jaws of death, and together with me the expeditionary force would have been destroyed there in the backwoods of Tianqiaoling. The old man did us a great service. He was a kind-hearted person who helped us without flinching from sacrifice, a worthy father of a guerrilla army commander.

It was strange that whenever my life was in danger benefactors such as old man Kim would appear before me and save me at the critical moment. A housewife in Jiaohe, whose name I had no opportunity to ask, protected me from being arrested by the enemy and old man Ma afforded me and my comrades a chance to relax after we had suffered hunger and cold on the heights of Luozigou. And now old man Kim, whom we had never seen before, had saved the expeditionary force and its commander from destruction on Tianqiaoling.

When I tell this story some people say that I was lucky. But some others regard it as fate. They do not consider it luck when benefactors appear to help patriots who devote their all to the country and the people. I would not wish to say who is right and who is wrong. Because on many occasions in my life I have received aid from benefactors, I can say that luck has always been on my side. It is natural that the luck should be generous to men who devote their lives to the people.

If the people had not known that our guerrilla army was an armed force of righteous men fighting for human emancipation,

and if the image of the guerrilla army had not left a mark of nobility and beauty in the people's minds, we would not have been helped by old man Kim on Tianqiaoling, and such a mysterious story as the incident on Tianqiaoling would have never been recorded in the annals of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

6. In the Bosom of the People

On that fateful night, when we successfully passed three sentry posts, we camped between the walls of a roofless burnt-out house in the Dawaizi valley. My comrades spent one night and one day nursing me in this ruin. Their nursing was far from qualified medical care. They just built a campfire and sat around it, taking turns to massage my arms and legs.

Next morning, some of my 16 men wandered over the mountain ridges in search of the houses of the Koreans who were said to be living there without registering names in the Manchukuo census records. However, it proved no easy job to locate the refuges of people who had turned their backs on the world in order to avoid observation by the Japanese army and police and Manchurian government officials. At midnight they found a log-cabin on the mountainside of Laoyeling amid dense primeval forest of pine-nut trees, white birches and *Abies nephroleps*. This was the house of old man Jo Thaek Ju which has become well-known among our people as the "solitary house at Dawaizi." Choe Il Hwa, the author of the reminiscences "Long Life and Good Health to the Leader,"

was the eldest daughter-in-law of old man Jo.

On a ledge midway up the mountain ridge there were two single-room log-cabins separated by a ditch between, as like each other as twins in size and form. Old man Jo's nine-member family lived in the cabin north of the ditch—his wife, his eldest son Jo Uk, his daughter-in-law and his grandchildren. His second son Jo Kyong's five-member family lived in the other cabin, south of the ditch. The eaves were too low; these were more like dugouts than log-cabins. Their roofs were covered thickly with earth on which several young pine trees were planted to camouflage their existence. This camouflage gave our reconnaissance party a lot of trouble in finding them as they wandered about the mountain.

Travellers passing through Laoyeling had never known of these shelters inhabited by people with an unusual outlook on life, who hid their very existence from the world. Only three liaison agents who travelled between north and east Manchuria knew the location of these shelters. Our reconnaissance party hardly had time to explain why they had come before old man Jo shouted to his son Jo Uk and grandson Jo Yong Son to bring guerrillas there right away, saying that even if the sky fell, Commander Kim Il Sung could not be left to suffer from this serious chill. He asked his daughter-in-law Choe Il Hwa to boil some water and prepare thin gruel.

From the Jo's house to the ruined house where we were was more than five miles by the shortest route. When Jo Uk and Jo Yong Son arrived at our camp with our reconnaissance party, my

men were sitting around the campfire boiling water for me, and I was in a coma. They took me on their backs and set out for Jo's house. Wal Ryong brought up the rear erasing our footprints with pine twigs.

Old man Jo who had known the sweet and bitter sides of life from childhood, asked a few questions of company commander Han and said that my disease was a cold fit, a serious illness caused by fatigue and lack of nourishment and that it could be life-threatening, but I would recover within three days if I got warm and sweated out. He added that the treatment of this disease required absolute rest.

"The reason why Commander Kim has not recovered consciousness so far is that the blood is not circulating smoothly in his body. If the blood circulation improves he will get better. So don't worry, go and relax in my second son's house," the old man said to company commander Han, as he and his daughter-in-law massaged my arms and legs.

These words lifted my men's spirits. Their faces had been long from worry about, since I had been totally incapacitated for several days.

Accompanied by Jo Yong Son, the soldiers crossed the ditch to Jo Kyong's house. Old man Jo's family and my two bodyguards stayed with me.

After giving me boiled water mixed with half a bowl of honey, the old man watched the reactions of my body, sometimes feeling my forehead. Some time later he offered me thin gruel mixed with

honey. My bodyguards, who nursed me that night together with old man Jo, said later that after I took the gruel some colour returned to my face and I awoke from the comatose state in which I had not been able to distinguish dream and reality. I felt refreshed, as if I were breathing the air of a balmy spring day, and my body and soul felt as buoyant as a flake of down. Around me I saw no sleigh covered with fur, no more of the snow-covered forest scenery through which we had made our tedious journey, no snowstorm, no coldness and no ear-splitting cracks as the pursuing enemy shot at us. Nor was there any more splitting headache, chill and high fever. How could this be? What had made such a clean sweep of the disease which had brought me to the threshold of death and caused me untold distress?

I gathered myself and strained my ears to hear the sound of the wind brushing against the window. The buzzing of the flaps of the papered window was like the sound of the biplane which we had encountered on a mountain peak in Laoyeling when we were leaving Duitoulazi. My eyes met the gaze of a strange old man, looking down at me with gentle eyes under his grey eyebrows.

In the old man's calloused hand, which was lightly holding my right wrist, I felt the warmth of my grandfather's hand in Mangyongdae as he touched my forehead and cheeks in my childhood.

"Where am I?" I quietly asked this mysterious old man who was watching over me.

My simple question produced such a strong reaction on the old

man’s face that I cannot describe it in words, written or spoken. The placid smile on his lips instantly extended to his cheeks and eyes, bringing a mysterious radiance to the wrinkled face of this old man who was as soft and unsophisticated as a ploughed field. It seemed I had never seen such a pure and trustworthy man before in my life.

Wal Ryong, who was sitting beside the old man, burst into tears and reported in a single breath how our expeditionary force had survived the crisis and reached this Dawaizi valley from the timber mill in Xipailinzi.

“Thank you, grandfather. I owe my life to your family.”

“Don’t mention it. God gave birth to you General Kim, and you have been saved in this log-cabin by God’s will, not by my family.”

The old man raised his head and looked up at the ceiling as if I had really come from the sky. His compliment made me feel awkward.

“Grandfather, I don’t think I’m worthy of your compliment. It is too much to compare me with a general born of the Divine will. I am the son and grandson of the common people; I was born into a nameless peasant family. As a soldier of Korea my services have been too little.”

“You are too modest. The whole world knows what distinguished services you have rendered in war. I am a mere ignoramus who makes a bare living tilling plots at land in these backwoods, but I have heard all the news going the rounds of the

three provinces of northeast China. Hey, my boys, this is the famous General Kim, who attacked the Dongning county town in the autumn of the year before last, leading the Korean army and Commander Wu's unit. Come here and bow to him."

The old man spoke in a passionate tone to his children as they came in through the kitchen door, together with the guerrillas who had woken up from their sound sleep at dawn to be told by Wal Ryong that I had regained consciousness. I sat up under the blanket and accepted their salutations.

In this log-cabin on a remote mountain the location of which was not even registered in the government census record, which even the postman did not visit, laughter filled the room at that ungodly hour.

"We are now merrily laughing," the platoon leader, Kim Thaek Gun, said with tears in his eyes. "But when we suffered great hardships, surrounded by the enemy, we thought we had no hope. We thought we would all die."

"You comrades made great efforts for my sake. It is lucky that you at least have survived. I will never forget your devotion and your heroism until my hair turns grey."

I would never forget the way my comrades-in-arms looked at me with tears in their eyes. That image from 50 years ago is still fresh in my memory. But I have forgotten the names of half of them. I would greatly love to hand down at least their names to posterity, but my poor memory betrays me. These 16 names have been buried among thousands of names of people connected with

me directly or indirectly over half a century. In order to recollect all the names which have been buried in the history of the anti-Japanese revolution, we would need a full historical record. But unfortunately we do not have such a record. We did not take up weapons to fight in the anti-Japanese war in order to leave our names in the historical record, but in order to create a new age in which the working masses would be masters.

However, I cannot justify myself with such excuses. I am a former guerrilla army commander who has forgotten the names of half of those comrades-in-arms who snatched me from the jaws of death.

"Grandfather, what is your native district? Why were you driven out into such a remote place?"

Setting my hand on his rake-like hand, on which the veins stood out clearly, I looked tenderly at his wrinkled face, which seemed to reflect the political history of half a century.

"My native district is Samjang Sub-county, Musan County. I was unable to endure the depredations of the Japanese, and left my native land at the age of twenty-nine and came to Helong," replied the old man sadly.

After he crossed the Tuman River, the old man had been a tenant farmer for about 30 years. Two years after the June Tenth Independence Movement Jo's family crossed the Laoyeling Mountains and began to reclaim barren land registered for the Japanese rice field project.

The severe trials suffered by an ill-fated peasant family as part

of the history of a ruined nation flashed before my eyes like a film on a screen.

After crossing the Laoyeling Mountains old man Jo drove fence stakes and laid foundation stones in the Dawaizi village, where three Korean families and five Chinese families lived. Aftrerwards the number of Korean houses increased to ten. In this remote mountain village, too, the Anti-Japanese Self-Defence Corps, the women's association, the Children's Vanguard and the Children's Corps organizations began to strike root. But the backlash of the September 18 incident swept away all these organizations. The "punitive" operations reduced the village to ashes.

The people built new houses on the sites of the burnt ones and continued determinedly building up their lives. In the spring of 1933, their houses were once again enveloped in flames and some people were burnt to death.

In the spring of 1934, Jo Thaek Ju's family built a log-cabin deep in the mountain of Laoyeling, approximately seven miles away from Dawaizi and then moved into it. This was the house in which I began to recover after drinking foxtail millet gruel mixed with honey. His nine-member family built a hut at the entrance of the valley five miles away from the log-cabin and tilled mountain plots there. In the farming season, when they were shorthanded, the whole family slept and took their meals in the hut to save time. They harvested the crops as soon as they were ripe and carried them on their backs to the log-cabin, where they stored the grains in a cellar, hulling them with a tread-mill little by little just before

eating them.

Old man Jo was satisfied with this simple, primitive self-supporting economy. His family only went to the Ningan county town when they needed to barter. They could not avoid these trips to the market if they were to obtain such goods as clothes, footwear, matches, salt, needles, thread and the like. This was their only connection with the outer world. Urban civilization came nowhere near the spot at the end of the world, where there was no road, no horses, no vehicles, no electricity. The children were totally isolated from education. Old man Jo's admonitions took the place of classes, and mother Choe Il Hwa's old stories and songs, which could be counted on one's fingers, were all the literature and art they could enjoy.

"Grandfather, are you not lonely in this remote mountain?" I asked the old man feeling a deep emotion close to resentment for him.

The old man smiled sadly at my question.

"The loneliness is beyond description. But because we can avoid the disgusting Japs, we feel we live on the fat of the land. The paradise of *Ryultoguk*[2] cannot be better than here."

The word *Ryultoguk* shocked me. How could this god-forsaken place be compared with *Ryultoguk?* Had the ideal of the Korean nation fallen down such depths? Japan was sending her emigrants to colonize the fertile lands of Korea, and our compatriots had been driven into a closed mountain valley like some mousehole in desolate Manchuria. What prison could be more terrible than this

place?

Yes, it was undoubtedly a prison. It differed from a common prison only in that it had no warder and no fence of its own. The warder of this prison was the army and the police of Japan and Manchukuo and the fence was their threats. Old man Jo took the anachronistic view that this prison was *Ryultoguk* in order to console himself.

His thinking that the prison where he was detained was a paradise disappointed me. I thought that if every Korean tolerated reality as old man Jo did, Korea could never be restored.

"Grandfather, the fate of Koreans has become so miserable that you call this place a *Ryultoguk*. Samsu and Kapsan which are known as places of exile, could not be more desolate than here. As long as the Japanese are entrenched in Korea and Manchuria, *Ryultoguk* and the reign of peace are inconceivable for us. You must know that someday the 'punitive' troops will enter this valley, too."

I opened my heart though I knew that the old man might be upset by my words. Old man Jo twitched his eyebrows and looked at me for a while with sad eyes.

"If those devils attack even this valley there will be no place left for Koreans to live. Damn it! What terrible evils torment our people.... Whenever I had to move to a new place I cursed the five ministers[17] who sold our country."

This was what old man Jo and I talked about that dawn.

Beginning the next day I left my bed to take a walk and to read.

A few days later I began doing some light manual work. In the daytime I gave military and political classes and in the evening I took part in a concert with my men. Whenever we had a concert, the two or three men who were staying at the old man Jo's house took me across the ditch to Jo Kyong's house. In these narrow and gloomy mountain refuges, the guerrillas abided strictly by their daily routine, just as they had done in Wangqing.

Three or four days later I was ready to order our departure. I had thought that it was unreasonable and went against common sense for a number of able-bodied men greater than the 14 members of the family to be living on them and taking so much out of their poor living earned from slash-and-burn tillage.

But company commander Han Hung Gwon objected to my decision. He dissuaded me persistently, saying that exposing myself to cold again after suffering from a cold fit would be tantamount to suicide, and he could not consent to such an adventure. He even dissuaded me from going for walks in the forest.

The food grain which about 20 able-bodied men consumed in taking three meals a day was by no means a small amount. Even at the rate of the daily rations supplied to a grown-up nowadays, we would have consumed four straw-sacks of grain if we stayed for 20 days. In any case, we ate most of this family's food.

However, old man Jo neither showed any reluctance nor betrayed in any expression of his face the burden which he had shouldered for our sake. On the contrary, when we said that we

were sorry to have caused him so much trouble, he never allowed us to continue saying that it was the duty and job of the people to support the army of their country, and it could not be a burden. He was really a very large-hearted old man.

Mother Choe Il Hwa, too, was very kind-hearted. Because her family were slash-and-burn farmers they had no rice, but she cooked food which tempted our appetites three times a day using foxtail millet, beans, barley, oats and potatoes. Sometimes she served ground bean mash and coarse bean curd boiled in bean paste. She was sorry that she could not serve me meat to restore my strength after my illness.

"I have not raised any domestic animals for fear that our house would be discovered, but now I really regret not having raised an animal. If we had at least a chicken I would cook it and serve it to you General.... I would gladly travel dozens of miles to buy meat, but I cannot, for fear of the mad 'punitive' troops. How cruel the world is...."

The heartfelt kindness I sensed in her harsh yet generous voice was exceptionally warm and profound.

"Mother, when you say things like that I feel awful. I am a son of the common people who knows what is it to live on vegetables and dried-radish-leaf soup. So you need not worry about meat. You said that you were sorry you could prepare only coarse bean curd, because you had no brine, but I can feel putting on weight from the coarse bean curd and ground bean mash."

"I had been told that the menfolk of Phyongan Provinces are

hot-tempered, but you Commander are very tender-hearted. You make me think that if I had a daughter I would marry her to a boy from Phyongan Provinces. I want you to empty your bowl at every meal, simple though the food may be, and recover your health completely under this roof."

Whenever I took a meal, the woman squatted anxiously in the kitchen hearth. She worried that I might stop eating without emptying all the bowls.

Even when I had no appetite, I used to eat up all the dishes on the small table with cabrioles in response to her sincere concern. Then a faint smile would appear on her lips.

These people's sincere concern for us was quite pure. If such sincerity were to be compared to a river, I would call it a "clear stream" or "crystal-clear stream." Such sincerity is boundless, it cannot be measured by length or weight.

A man who enjoys the love of the people is happy, and a man who does not is unhappy. This is the view of the nature of happiness which I have maintained throughout my life. Just as in the past, I still feel nowadays the greatest pride and joy in enjoying the love of the people. I consider this the true meaning of life. Only those who understand this true meaning can be the genuine sons and faithful servants of the people.

Thanks to the sincere efforts of Jo Thaek Ju's family I quickly recovered my health. I frequently went for walks in spite of Han's warning. Sometimes I helped the family to chop firewood and pound grains in a tread-mill.

More than ten days had passed since we entered the Dawaizi valley and were granted the tender care of Jo's family. I thought we should return to the guerrilla zone. I felt as though many years had passed since we left Wangqing. In fact we had left it only three months before, but I was anxious to know what had been happening in the guerrilla zone and what the zone would look like when we returned to Wangqing. The future seemed uncertain to me.

While we were working in the area around Badaohezi, messengers from east Manchuria had warned us many times that a purge had created some disturbance in the minds of the people in Jiandao. Some of them complained that the struggle of the anti-"Minsaengdan" clique was crushing the revolutionary base itself and others said that if the purge was stepped up, the guerrilla zone would collapse in a year or two.

I reaffirmed my resolve to return to the guerrilla zone and eliminate the harmful consequences of the ultra-Leftist anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle as soon as possible.

One day I walked for a while in the forest and then went back to Jo Kyong's house to announce my decision to company commander Han Hung Gwon.

The company commander was sitting on a tree stump near the house looking vacantly into the northern sky. When I saw him sitting there as motionless as a wooden statue with his arms folded on his chest, I felt he was wrapped in deep and heartbreaking thought. When I came closer, Han stood up, rubbing his eyes.

When I saw his eyes were reddish, I was a little frightened. Had something bothered him during the night? Or was this stout-hearted man suffering from some agony which he could not reveal to anyone?

"Company Commander, what is the matter so early in the morning? You are not like the Han Hung Gwon I know."

After asking this question I walked around him. For some reason he watched me with a gloomy expression. He blinked tearful eyes, heaved a deep sigh and said slowly:

"We had dozens of men when we began our march to north Manchuria, but now only sixteen are left alive. What great efforts we made to build up our company!"

With deep emotion we both recalled the days when we were building up the 5th company. The 5th company had been organized on the basis of some men from the 2nd Wangqing company, which was in Shiliping. I went to the Luozigou area leading a group of men from the 2nd company and increased the ranks by recruiting young men there. This was the 5th company, led by Han Hung Gwon.

The 5th Wangqing company was also under my personal command. In the days when I commanded a battalion and a regiment, I always took this company with me to harass the enemy from behind his lines. The 5th company was one of the strongest elite companies, among all the guerrilla units in east Manchuria with rich combat experience. But this company now had to return to the guerrilla zone, reduced to skin and bone after the loss of

many comrades. It was natural that Han should writhe in agony and bury his head in his hands.

"When I think of the losses the 5th company has suffered, I, too, feel my heart breaking. But I take comfort in the fact that we gave great help to our comrades in north Manchuria. From that point of view, we had great success, didn't we? Comrade Hung Gwon, this blood has not been spilt in vain. Let us extend our ranks again and make the enemy pay a thousand fold for the blood of our comrades-in-arms."

The words I spoke to Han were also addressed to myself.

Han Hung Gwon continued looking up into the northern sky with his lips tightly closed. A few words of consolation could not heal the wound in his mind. The grief of a man was clearly beyond measurement by depth and density.

His silence neither disappointed me nor offended me, but merely doubled my trust in him.

A few days later I ordered the men to march, despite old man Jo's objections. As we lined up in front of the log-cabin to bid farewell to the old man, our faces were grave.

"Grandfather, I came to this house on a man's back, but now I shall return to the guerrilla zone on my own two feet. But for your family, I would not have recovered or survived. I will never forget your kind help."

I regretted my inability to find better words of gratitude for old man Jo. The depth of my emotion seemed to be directly proportional to my lack of command of language.

Old man Jo was upset by my words.

"I hardly deserve your compliments, for I have not even served you a piece of meat. I am sorry I must say good-bye to you so soon, Commander Kim. But I will not detain you because you must leave for the sake of Korea. When the country has become independent we will leave this mountain valley and return home. We put all our trust in you Commander Kim."

"We sons of Korea feel we are guilty of a serious crime when we see you living in hiding in this foreign land where you came to find a way to survive. But, grandfather, the day will surely come when you will live in bright sunshine. When spring comes, the enemy's 'punitive' operation will become more violent and gunshot will be heard frequently, even in this valley. You should move towards Luozigou. You will be safer there, where the wind of revolution blows strongly."

After giving him this advice, I left the valley of Dawaizi.

Mother Choe Il Hwa had packed three days' provisions for our journey in our knapsacks. She had prepared them by pounding and polishing foxtail millet and barley through the night. She also gave us chilli bean paste and cooked rice balls wrapped in the white birch bark to eat on the way. Her eldest son Jo Yong Son guided us to Barengou, forcing his way through the deep snow in Laoyeling.

Some time later gunshots were frequently heard near Jo's house. Our prophecy came true. Jo's family left Dawaizi in secret one midnight with bundles of food and threadbare clothes and moved to Taipinggou, where they became tenant farmers.

In June 1935, I met his family again in Taipinggou. An east Manchurian expedition force which had annihilated a rabid Jingan army unit in Laoheishan was staying in Xintunzi, near Taipinggou, conducting vigorous work among the masses. We also sent able political workers to Taipinggou. All of them had benefitted from Jo's hospitality at Dawaizi. They met old man Jo Thaek Ju on the road by chance and reported to me about it.

I visited Jo's house that very day. Half a year before I had been carried unconscious to his house on the backs of my comrades. In all the vast north Manchurian plain there were only 16 men, totally exhausted, left in my company. But this time I called on the old man in good health and in command of a large army. I wanted to meet the benefactors who had saved me from death and taken tender care of me with all the sincerity that a man could offer, but the gift I was carrying with me was too small and too light to express all my gratitude. All I had in my hands was a few pounds of meat and some money with which his family could buy food for a month or two. How good it would have been if the few pounds of meat had been dozens of domestic animals and the money had been an ox-cart laden with gold coins!

I was ashamed that I could not repay the full extent of my debt.

But I quickened my pace, full of vigour, my head held high. My package may be small, but it was good luck for us to meet again alive. It was a truly great happiness that both Jo's family and I were in good health.

In a small room which clearly betrayed poverty, the large

family of more than ten was living in rags, in dire misery, but they welcomed me with a broad smile on their faces. I sat on the porch with the old man and shared past experiences. He was curious to know how the revolutionary army had destroyed the Jingan army and I was concerned about the poverty of Jo's family.

"Grandfather, how do you till the land and gather firewood without an ox?"

This had been worrying me since my stay at Dawaizi.

"We do it ourselves, all fourteen of us working like a horse or an ox, pulling the plough and carrying the firewood."

He seemed exceptionally calm and objective as he spoke without exaggeration of the poverty which he had suffered for 60 years, apparently regarding it as a matter of course.

"It must be a herculean task to support your large family."

"Yes, it is a heavy task. But tilling the land is nothing compared to the hardships you go through, General Kim. We are in good spirits nowadays even though we are badly off."

"Is there anything that makes you so happy?"

"We feel as if we had become rich because your army has repeatedly defeated the Japs. When we hear news of the revolutionary army destroying the enemy, we forget our hunger. I had hardly any hope left when I saw you off in Dawaizi. I wondered how an army the size of my family could possibly do such great work. But yesterday I saw hundreds of your soldiers as you returned in triumph from Laoheishan. I slapped my knee, saying to myself, 'Now everything will go well. Korea will surely

win!' "

When he lived in Dawaizi, the old man talked mostly about the people's welfare, but to my surprise he was now interested only in the results of the revolutionary army's battles. He had become a different man in half a year. The feeble and nonresistant hermit who had rejected the world and turned his back on it had changed into an optimist who lived in hopes for the future after returning to the life with which he had once broken.

If the army fights well the people will become more courageous—this was what I felt when I met old man Jo that day.

As I was leaving his house I left some money to help him out and the next day I sent him a white horse which we had captured in the Laoheishan battle. The horse was rather lean, but I hoped that his family could fatten it up and use it as a draught animal. It was a trifling repayment for the kindness which Jo's family had shown to me. Money or wealth could never be adequate to repay my debt to his family.

In the turbulent events of the subsequent years I lost contact with Jo's family. During those years I was active mainly in the Mt. Paektu area. After moving to the Mt. Paektu area I never visited Taipinggou. In the autumn of 1959 I discovered the whereabouts of the Jos. I received a report that a group of visitors to the old battlefields of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, which was sent to northeast China, had discovered mother Choe Il Hwa in Ningan. My greatest benefactors whom for scores of years I had tried to find by tracing rumours were still resolutely alive, but in another

part of the world. I wanted to cross the border right away and run towards Ningan in order to bow to them in thanks. I wanted to meet them in the homeland where the dream of our martyrs has come true and express the deep emotions which we had pent as we missed each other for such a long time, to retrace old footprints which are now covered with moss.

However, between her family and me there was a barrier called the national border. Our meeting called for a complicated procedure: but such obstacles could not cool my earnest desire to meet them.

How I wished to be a commoner with an ordinary passport, even for a few months, so that I could travel, wearing canvas shoes and puttees, carrying a knapsack on my back and eating rice balls and some times crossing water up to my knees with my trousers rolled up, as I did in the guerrilla army, so that I could look round the old battlefields, covering the graves of my comrades-in-arms with turves, and exchange greetings with the benefactors who helped and protected me at the cost of their own lives.

Apparently every politician longs for a commoner's life. It is only natural for a head of state to envy a commoner's life.

After liberation I had many opportunities to visit China and the Soviet Union. In Manchuria and Soviet Central Asia there were many comrades-in-arms and benefactors whom I wanted to meet. But the official duties of a Head of State did not permit me to include private concerns in my itinerary. I had to devote all my thoughts to the reconstruction of a country which had been

devastated in two great wars—the anti-Japanese war and the anti-US war.

If I had visited the Soviet Union or China as a commoner, I would have had no difficulty in meeting all those people with whom I came into contact during the anti-Japanese war. This is the reason I sometimes envy a commoner's life.

If I say I feel restricted in my personal and daily life because I am the Head of State who leads the country, some people may ask doubtfully, "How can this be?" If I say I am going to some place to give personal guidance, some officials will say, "Mr. President, the weather is not fine there." If I say I am going somewhere to meet certain people, they say, "Mr. President, there is a swamp on that route, so the car cannot go in that direction." Of course, they do this out of consideration for me, but such concern means that I am not free.

The following year mother Choe Il Hwa returned home with her family. After various twists and turns lasting 60 years, the hateful wanderings of this family, which began with old man Jo's move to Helong, concluded with his descendants' returning home to Pyongyang. Just imagine the feelings of the Jos at the sight of the independent homeland, a country of freedom and a state which was now rising magnificently on the debris, beneath the banner of self-reliance.

Choe Il Hwa returned home at the historic moment when the whole country was in turmoil over the repatriation of Koreans from Japan, a process which the world called a "great national

migration from capitalism to socialism." In this ecstatic mood of repatriation the Jos returned home.

By that time Choe Il Hwa was 67 years old. Her hair was grey as if she carried the snow in the shade of the Dawaizi valley on her head. When she met me she cried and grasped my hands as the wife of Ryang Se Bong had done.

"Mother, why are you crying on this happy day, when we met again among the living?"

I took out my handkerchief to wipe away her tears, but she raised the tie of her dress to her eyes.

"I am crying at the memory of the days when you were suffering from a cold fit."

"Don't mention my suffering. You and grandfather Jo did a great deal to help me. My feelings of gratitude to you made me keep trying to find your family after liberation, and I sent many people to Manchuria. Our ways parted in the summer of 1935 in Taipinggou. I was told that you had moved to Ningan because the 'punitive' operations became so violent. How did you get along afterwards?"

"We used the white horse to gather firewood and sold it to eke out a living. Had it not been for the horse you gave us, we would have all starved to death."

"I am glad the white horse was of use. Is it true that grandfather Jo Thaek Ju died in 1953?"

"Yes. While he was alive, my father-in-law talked of nothing but you, Premier. Whenever he heard a rumour that American

planes had bombed Pyongyang, he could not sleep, saying 'General Kim Il Sung must be safe' or 'He is suffering too much.' "

I was deeply moved to hear from her that the old man had not forgotten me until he breathed his last, and had wished me good health. The people's hearts remain unchanged. Everything in the world has changed, but the people's love for us has never changed. This love handed down from yesterday will be carried forward in the future. It will never be stained by adversity and misfortune, but shine for ever like a jewel.

"If only he had lived seven years longer, grandfather Jo could have returned home. It is a great pity. Even today, I also sometimes think of the log-cabin in Dawaizi. Have you ever been there since you left it?"

"No, I haven't. I do not think I could live there again."

"You need not go to that mountain valley again. You have suffered too many hardships in the course of your life, and you must live in comfort for the rest of your days, cared for by your children. I will find a house for you."

When she called at my house on April 15, 1961 to congratulate me on my 49th birthday, Choe Il Hwa presented me with a fountain-pen. She was shy as she explained her gift.

"Mr. Premier, the white horse you gave our family became, as it were, this fountain-pen. We fattened up the white horse and used it for farming as you told us to, but we bartered it for an ox for fear that the Japanese would requisition it as a war-horse. Our living

depended on that ox. After liberation we registered the ox in a Chinese cooperative society. Before I returned home I received the purchase price for the ox and I bought this fountain-pen with the money. I present this fountain-pen to you with wishes for a long life and good health and success in your work. I hope you will accept it as a token of my very best wishes."

I felt profoundly moved as I looked back upon the many trials and ordeals of our people's history, a history epitomized by the Jo family, who travelled a long road on which a white horse became a fountain-pen.

"Thank you, mother. I will live long and serve the people as you wish."

On August 15 that year, when all the families of the country were celebrating the 16th anniversary of national liberation, I called at mother Choe's house on the Taedong River. Children's laughter was ringing in the rooms full of the fresh spirit of life in a new home. I had personally chosen the site of this block of flats for writers and anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans and had scrutinized its design. In those days there was no better block of flats in Pyongyang.

Pyongyang citizens compare the Kyongsang-dong area where Choe lives with the yolk of an egg.

"Mother, do you like this flat?"

"Of course, I like it. I have never lived in such a fine house."

She opened the window wide to look out on the river. She was obviously proud of her new house. A cool breeze was blowing

from the river, gently ruffling her hair, turned grey by many hardships.

"I selected your house on the riverside because you lived in the remote mountains all your life. Won't you miss the mountains sometimes?"

"No, I prefer to see the Taedong River. I feel I am putting on weight living here by the river."

"But still you may miss the mountain life. Dawaizi was a barren land where life is very hard, but the air there was fresh. If you miss the fresh mountain air, you should climb up Moran Hill. I thought you might miss the mountain, and I chose this house near Moran Hill so that you could go there to walk. When better houses are built in future, I will give you a new home."

"Mr. Premier, I am satisfied with this house. All I want is to live near you."

She came out to the entrance door of the block of flats to see me off. When I held out my hand to say good-bye, she grasped it tightly and asked me a serious question.

"Mr. Premier, have you any experienced doctor near you?" I was embarrassed by the irrelevance of her question.

"We have many doctors. Why do you ask?"

"I was thinking of the days when you were suffering from that cold fit. Who will take care of you if another virulent disease should strike you?"

"Don't worry, mother, I am in good health. Even if I should contract such an illness, I am not afraid, because I am near you,

who are so experienced in curing fits of cold."

After I left Choe, I looked round the main streets of the capital sunk in deep thought. There was an animated holiday atmosphere in the streets. Sungri Street and the People's Army Street, in which the movement to build 20 thousand flats was launched, and all the main streets of Pyongyang had been improved with magnificent public buildings and multi-storeyed blocks of flats. In the eight years since the war, tens of thousands of Pyongyang citizens had left their dugouts and moved into the newly-built blocks of flats which were one of the wonderful achievements of postwar reconstruction.

And yet, the work of construction was only just beginning. As yet, most of the citizens of the capital were still living in shabby dugouts and old-fashioned one-room houses. They had made painful sacrifices and suffered appalling hardships, enduring the crucible of the anti-Japanese and the anti-US wars, trials which no other people in the world had ever experienced. No people in the world had shed so much blood, braved such cold winds and missed so many meals as our people did. For these people we had to build more good houses, make more nice clothes and build more fine schools, holiday homes and hospitals. And we had to bring home more of our compatriots in foreign lands, who yearned for their homeland. This was what I had to do with my life, for the sake of the people who had cured me of my sickness and plucked me from the jaws of death.

These thoughts kept me awake at night.

Choe Il Hwa died several years ago, and was buried in the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery. Her son, Jo Yong Son, who guided us to Barengou, and her daughter who used to fetch us water are now a grandfather and a grandmother in their seventies. It is wonderful good fortune that they can spend the latter half of their lives in the liberated homeland. It is thousands of miles from Pyongyang to Dawaizi. Almost 60 years has already passed since we set out from that isolated valley covered with deep snow, but the sound of the swaying forest which protected old man Jo's solitary house from the raging snowstorm still rings in my ears.

NOTES

1. Takagi Takeo (1905-1981)–Hailing from Fukui Prefecture, Japan, he worked for the *Yomiuri Shimbun* from 1930 as a journalist and a leader writer. From 1972 he was the chairman of the Japan-Korea Cultural Exchange Society. His books on the revolutionary struggle of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung entitled *Flames Kindled on Mt. Paektu*, *Stories about Kim Il Sung in Manchuria* and *Kim Il Sung's Advance into the Homeland* are based on the reminiscences of the veterans of the anti-Japanese armed struggle which he heard during his several visits to Korea and the reminiscences of Japanese soldiers and government officials, as well as on confidential documents of the Japanese imperialists and events which he either covered or witnessed as a special war correspondent for the *Yomiuri Shimbun* in Changchun.

2. *Ryultoguk*–An ideal country described in the Korean classic novel *The Tale of Hong Kil Dong.* Hong Kil Dong, the hero of the novel, cursed contemporary society, and aspired to this country, where life would be pleasant, with no class differences between the aristocrats and commoners.

3. Ya. T. Novichenko–On March 1, 1946, during a meeting in celebration of the 27th anniversary of the March First Movement at the Pyongyang Station Square, Novichenko, a bodyguard at the headquarters of the Soviet Army in Korea, defended the leader of the Korean revolution by covering with his own body the hand grenade which was thrown at the platform by reactionaries. As a result he lost his right hand. He now lives in Russia.

4. Kim Kwang Chol (1965-1990)–An officer of the Korean People's Army. In January 1990, during field training, he was killed when he saved more than ten

soldiers by covering a hand grenade with his own body just before it exploded.

5. Han Yong Chol–A soldier of the Korean People's Army. In February 1992, during preparations for combat training, he died at the age of 21 after throwing himself over a hand grenade just before it exploded and saving the lives of his comrades.

6. Kye Wol Hyang–A patriotic woman who helped General Kim Ung So of our forces to finish off the enemy general Konishi during the occupation of the Walled City of Pyongyang by the Japanese forces of aggression in June 1592.

7. Ron Kae–A patriotic woman who enticed a Japanese general to go with her, and then threw him and herself into the Nam River from the Choksok Pavilion when the Jinju castle was seized during the Imjin Patriotic War (1592-1598).

8. Height 1211–This is a peak situated in the middle east of Korea. It was an important peak from the strategic point of view during the Korean war (June 1950-July 1953) which was provoked by the US imperialists and south Korean puppets. The enemy therefore mobilized large numbers of troops, weapons and equipment and attempted to take the hill at any cost. The defenders of Height 1211, observing the orders of the Supreme Commander Comrade Kim Il Sung not to yield even an inch of the land to the enemy, repelled and smashed the enemy's repeated attacks, displaying unparalleled courage and self-sacrifice in defending the height, thus making a great contribution to safeguarding the fatherland. Height 1211 has thus become synonymous with the defence of the fatherland and the height of heroism. The enemy, who were defeated in the battle for Height 1211, called this hill "heartbreak ridge," because they felt heartbroken at the very sight of the height, and they dubbed the valley south of the hill the "punch bowl" because they feared that there would be no escape once they entered it.

9. Chun Hyang and the young nobleman Ri–The heroine and hero of the classic novel *The Tale of Chun Hyang.* This tale criticizes the caste inequality of social status in the feudal Ri dynasty, which prevented men and women of the lower classes and the nobility from loving each other, and proclaims the right to love and marry regardless of differences in property and social status.

10. Kang Jin Gon (1885-1963)–An anti-Japanese independence fighter hailing from Riwon, South Hamgyong Province. After taking part in the March First Popular Uprising, he organized the Association for the Promotion of Industry, an anti-Japanese organization for independence. He commanded the assault upon the police substation in Ryongsong in Samsu County. He was arrested by the Japanese imperialists in August 1923 and served a prison term of nearly 20 years. After the liberation of the country he worked as the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Peasants' Union of North Korea from 1946. Later he was active in turn as a member of the People's Committee of North Korea, a deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly and a member of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea.

11. Ri Yong (1888-1954)–Hailing from Pukchong, South Hamgyong Province, he graduated from Posong High School in Seoul and later from the military academy in Zhejiang Province, China in 1918. From 1921 he worked as commander of the Koryo Volunteers' Army and concurrently as the commandant of the military academy attached to it. He also took part in the battle to eliminate the remnants of the white party, together with the Soviet Red Army. In 1946 he was Chairman of the New Progressive Party and from 1948 he served in turn as the Minister of City Management, the Minister of Justice and Minister without Portfolio.

12. Ri Su Bok (1933-1951)–A soldier of the Korean People's Army, hailing from Sunchon, South Phyongan Province. During the Korean war provoked by the US imperialists and south Korean puppets he died at the age of 18 after

blocking an enemy pillbox with his breast in the battle to retake the nameless height adjoining Height 1211 and paving the way for his unit to advance.

13. Widow Paek–An alias of Paek Son Haeng, a philanthropist hailing from Pyongyang. Even though she was rich she led a simple life and devoted her money to the needs of society. She donated a vast amount of money to the Changdok School and for the building of a bridge and a two-storeyed public hall. She was widowed before the age of 20 but remained faithful to her dead husband until she reached the age of 80.

14. The Guan's unit incident–An incident in which the secret guerrilla army of Ri Kwang in Wangqing disarmed a Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army unit called the Guan's unit, supposedly in order to prevent its surrender to the Japanese imperialists. The Guan's unit used this incident as an excuse to launch an indiscriminate campaign of revenge against the communists, with the result that relations between the guerrilla army and the national salvation army became rapidly deteriorated, creating difficulties for the activities of the guerrilla army.

15. The Heihe incident–A bloody fratricide which broke out in 1921 as the Korean Independence Army units scrambled for hegemony in Heihe City (a free city) situated in the border area between Manchuria and Russia.

16. Turtle boat–The world's first armoured warship, made in Korea in the 16th century.

17. The five ministers–These were Ri Wan Yong, Minister of Education, Ri Ji Yong, Minister of Home Affairs, Ri Kun Thaek, Minister of Defence, Kwon Jung Hyon, Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, and Pak Je Sun, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who yielded to Japanese pressure and signed the "Japan-Korea Treaty" (Ulsa Treaty), an unequal and aggressive treaty which Japan imposed upon Korea in November 1905.